

THE
LAST WITNESS
“Die Letstee Adeis”



A biography as told by Sara Ross
Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski

THE
LAST WITNESS
“Die Letstee Adeis”

A biography as told by Sara Ross
Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski

Abraham Ross, M.D.
Abram Rosjanski

2020 FIRST EDITION

CONTENTS

I.	Pre (and during) WWI Russia: November 1914 to November 1918	1
A.	Lomza, Russia/Poland: 1917 to 1920	7
II.	Lubishchitsy (Lyubishchitsy), Poland: 1921 to 1939 Between WWI and WWII “Vatsevitsh” (Ivatsevichi, Iwacewicze, Ivatsevichy, Ivatzvitch)	9
A.	Our new home in Lubishchitsy, Poland	9
B.	Ivatsevichi, Poland(Vatsevitsh, Iwacewicze, Ivatsevichy, Ivatzvitch)	12
C.	Jewish life between WWI and WWII	18
D.	My Family	21
E.	Marriage: August 3, 1938	23
III.	Russian Occupation of Poland	27
A.	WWII September 1939 to June 1941 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact	27
IV.	German Occupation of Russian Occupied Poland WWII: June 1941 to August 1942	31
A.	Ivatsevichi and Byten Ghetto: June 1941 to August 1942 Establishing the Vatsevitsh (Ivatsevichi) Ghetto: June 1941	33
B.	Ivatsevichi Ghetto Expulsion – “Yudenrhein:” March 14, 1942	36
C.	Byten Ghetto: March 1942 to Spring 1942	38
D.	Vatsevitsh (Ivatsevichi) Ghetto: Spring 1942 to August 6, 1942	40
E.	Ivatsevichi Ghetto Massacre/Slaughter: August 6, 1942; 23 AV, 5702	48
V.	Partisan (Resistance movement) Period Forest of Volche Nory (Wolcze Nary, Wolf Caves); WWII: August 8, 1942 to July 1944	57
A.	The First Six Weeks: August 8, 1942 to Sept 17,1942	58
B.	Partisans – Shchors battalion marched southeast towards Pinsk “Blotes” (Swamps): August 1942	64
C.	“Oblava:” The German Noose (German Siege)	66
D.	The First Year: 1942 to 1943 First Winter and Russian Anti-Semitism: 1942 to 1943	69
E.	Soviet Des’ant (parachute drop) – “A ness fun Got” – Our Miracle: December 1942	74
F.	“Boyevoja” (Boya-voya) Partisans: December 1942	75
G.	Spring 1943	78
H.	Second Year and Winter in the Forest: 1943 to 1944	78
I.	Typhus Epidemic: February 1943	80
J.	Spring 1944	80
K.	Man Hunts and Inhuman conditions Two years in the forest!	81
L.	Russian and Jewish Partisan Sabotage Activity “War of the Rail-tracks” 1942 to 1944	82
VI.	Red Army Liberation: WWII: July 1944	85
VII.	WWII: Russian Occupation Back lines of the Red Army: July to October 1944	87
VIII.	Lubishchitsy – returning home: October 1944 to 1946	89
A.	WWII: Victory in Europe: May 1945	90

	B. Abe is born: September 5, 1945	91
	C. Sara Polonski (Polonska) Returns home: 1945.....	91
	D. Leaving Lubishchitsy, Russia: Spring 1946.....	96
IX.	Breslau, Poland (Wroclaw): Spring to Summer 1946.....	99
	A. Crossing the Borders: July 1946.....	99
X.	Linz, Austria – American Zone: 1946 to 1951 Displaced Persons Camp (DP)	103
	A. Displaced Persons Camp (DP): Lager Ebelsberg: October 1947 to October 1950	108
	B. Immigration plans in Ebelsberg.....	118
	C. Displaced Persons Camp (DP): Lager Wels (Asten) 1001: October 1950 to April 1951	128
	D. Immigration USA – Coming to America: April 1951.....	132
XI.	United States of America	135
	A. Life in Cincinnati, Ohio: the early years: 1951 to 1956.....	136
	B. USA Citizenship: 1956	140
	C. German restitution and disability pension application process	145
	D. Life After 1956.....	147
	E. Reflections.....	157
XII.	Epilogue: A celebration of Jewish life.....	159
XIII.	Appendix	161
	A. Family Martyrs During the Shoah.....	161
	B. Einsatzgruppen B (Mobile Killing Units) and Its Subunits.....	176
	C. Family Trees and Documents.....	178
	D. Russian and Translated Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory from the USSR, State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF) and translation — Reel 16-Belarus-Brest Oblast — Ivatsevichi 1944/1945	195

INTRODUCTION

My name is Abram Rosjanski, Abraham Ross MD, and I was named after my maternal grandfather, Avraham, Abram Zuchowicki. I was born in the village of Lubishchitsy, Poland/Belarus (6-7 km. from Ivatsevichi) to Yankel (Jakob, Jacob) and Sara (pronounced “sorah” in yiddish) Zuchowicki Rosjanski (Ross) in my maternal grandparent’s house (after the Red Army liberation) on September 5, 1945.

The Last Witness, (Die Letste Eidesis in Yiddish) is my mother, Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski, Sara Ross’, biography and testimony, of her life as she told it to me. My mother had an incredible memory and I recorded her eyewitness accounts with notes, audio and videotapes. Steven Spielberg’s “Survivors of the Shoah visual History Foundation” interviewed my mother on August 22, 1995 (#01080) in Miami Beach, Florida during a reunion of Holocaust Survivors. She was the last eyewitness of our family from the town of Ivatsevichi (my mother and the locals called it Vatsseitsh), and the village of Lubishchitsy, Poland (now Belarus). This true story documents her life before, during and after the Shoah.

Between the world wars my mother’s family had a very comfortable and beautiful traditional Orthodox Jewish life and were very involved and respected by the Jewish and non-Jewish community.

My mother would tell her story of the war years openly without reservation to all who would listen! She felt compelled to tell her story of World War II, the Shoah, so we would not forget. This is a story of death, devastation, persecution, brutality and harassment but also a story of physical and emotional resistance and survival.

The Ivatsevichi (Vatsseitsh) ghetto destroyed all aspects of human rights and Jewish life through physical and emotional torture. The ghetto identified and isolated the Jewish population and allowed the Germans to collect money and valuables and was a resource of Jewish labor and trade skills. Eventually it became the staging area of Jewish mass murders on the 23rd of AV, 1942 in Ivatsevichi.

She told of the unbelievable near death physical and emotional survival and active resistance, sabotage acts and combat, targeting trains and telegraphic communications as Jewish partisans in the Volche Nory Forest. They survived Russian, Nazi and their collaborators Anti-Semitism. They survived Nazi and their collaborator’s manhunts and persecution as well as the horrific brutal forest conditions, deprivation and disease.

When the war ended, they left behind a Jewish cemetery within the ghettos and forest. 97% of the Jewish population was killed in the Russian occupied areas, which is higher than in the European occupied areas. Also, more active German resistance and sabotage occurred in the Russian occupied areas than in Europe.

Before WWII no one in my mother’s family believed that the Nazis had the motivation and capacity to kill, destroy and wipe out the European Jewish communities until the few remaining survivors became the eyewitnesses.

My parent’s story did not end with their liberation by the Red Army in 1944. After the war our remaining three family survivors, my uncle, Aron Zuchowicki, and my parents, Sara and Yankel (Jacob) Rosjanski (Ross) had the almost impossible task of bringing order through courage and emotional strength to re-build their shattered lives that were totally destroyed by Nazi insanity, prejudice and world indifference.

After liberation from Auschwitz and Ravensbruck concentration camp, Sara Polonski¹ married Aron Zuchowicki in 1945 and joined my parents to become the new nucleus of our inseparable family unit. The four survivors made the

1 Sara Zuchowicki Shoah foundation interview on November 20, 1995 in Cincinnati, Ohio

difficult decision to leave their home that spanned generations, to immigrate west. They did not know where they would end up. The incredible courage of our four survivors to bring children into the world showed unbelievable strength and belief in humanity and the ability to look beyond the darkness, evil and despair of the Shoah.

My parents' difficult struggle continued in displaced persons (DP) camps in Linz, Austria and in their new home in Cincinnati, Ohio that they embraced in 1951. My father developed a progressive and devastating form of Parkinson's disease caused by Typhus encephalitis during the Shoah in the winter of 1943/44. His Parkinson's disease left him totally disabled. Not only could he not work, my mother became a single-handed full-time (24/7) physical and emotional caregiver. My mother cared for my father with unyielding devotion and personal sacrifice for fourteen years that provided no personal life for herself. My mother raised two sons (myself and my brother Aron) and had to rely on the community for financial support. These family factors impacted all of us economically, physically and emotionally but mostly my parents. These were incredibly difficult times beyond my, or anyone's, comprehension and my mother single-handedly exceeded anyone's measure. A woman of valor. In spite of all of my parent's obstacles they gave Aron and myself a wealth of guidance, nurturing and love to appreciate our rich Jewish culture and our country. My mother's limited education was no obstacle in helping us in school and develop emotionally to achieve our potential. This provided us the opportunity to succeed, so we could give back to the country that took us in.

My mother's mission and perseverance has made this true story possible to live on. My mother always stated, why do Jews remember and retell Jewish tragedies like the exodus out of Egypt, but not the Jewish European devastation and destruction during the Shoah? Who will remember each and every Jewish life that was slaughtered when the survivors are gone? Who will remember my son Schmu-el, Samuel, and so many nephews and nieces who were beautiful innocent young children whose life and potential were extinguished because they were Jewish? My mother would ask – "Where was G-d"?

As I wrote my mother's eyewitness testimony, I heard her tell me the story. I have added historical documents from Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian sources which I footnoted to re-affirm and confirm her testimony. Her memory was crystal clear and not distorted by the horror of the events. As you read her true story, I hope you will hear my mother tell her story to you in her style with her Eastern European Yiddish accent. You will then become our family's witness.

My mother's mission was to provide eyewitness testimony, so we do not forget and to pass on her story to future generations. It is now my turn to continue my mother's mission to teach my children and grandchildren so they can teach their children and grandchildren.

As Elie Wiesel has stated, "For the dead and living, we must bear witness."

Gedank, Zachor, Remember our family history.

*Abraham Ross MD
Abram Rosjanski
May 2014*



Figure 1: *Sara and Jacob Ross (Rosjanski) 1955/1956*



Figure 2: Map of Geographic area – Russia/Poland/Belarus

CHAPTER I

PRE (AND DURING) WWI RUSSIA: NOVEMBER 1914 TO NOVEMBER 1918

My name is Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski, Sara Ross, and I was born in the rural village of Podstariny (Pasterine), Russia near the town of Kossow-Poleski² (Kossov, Kossowo, Kosovo, Kossovo) and Byten³, Russia on May 15, 1913. After World War I this area became Poland. I was the fourth of five children of my parents, Avraham (Abram, Avram) Zuchowicki, and Razel Orlinski Zuchowicki (see family trees). My oldest sibling was Leiba who was eight years older than me. My brother Aron was six years older than me. My sister Chanah was 4½ years older than me. In 1914 my youngest brother, Isroel Ichie, was born and he was named after my mother's father.

Ivatsevichi Geopolitical Information:

	Town	District	Province	Country
Before WWI (c. 1900):	Ivatsevichi	Slonim	Grodno	Russian Empire
Between the wars (c. 1930):	Iwacewicz	Kossów	Polesie	Poland
After WWII (c. 1950):	Ivatsevichi			Soviet Union
Today (c. 2000):	Ivatsevichy			Belarus

Figure 3: *JewishGen web site*

Ivatsevichi distance to nearby towns:

- Lubishchitsy 4.2 miles
- Kossovo 8 miles WNW
- Byten 13 miles NNE
- Ruzhany 21 miles WNW
- Slonim 25 miles N
- Volkovysk 48 miles
- Zelva 41 miles

Figure 4: *JewishGen web site*

² Jews arrived in Kosow at the end of the 16th century. In 1921 there were 1,473 Jews, 60.5 % of the population. (USHMM)

³ Byten is on the Szczara River and the Jewish community dates back to the 16th century. In 1921 there were 529 Jews in Byten. (USHMM Ghettos and Camps)

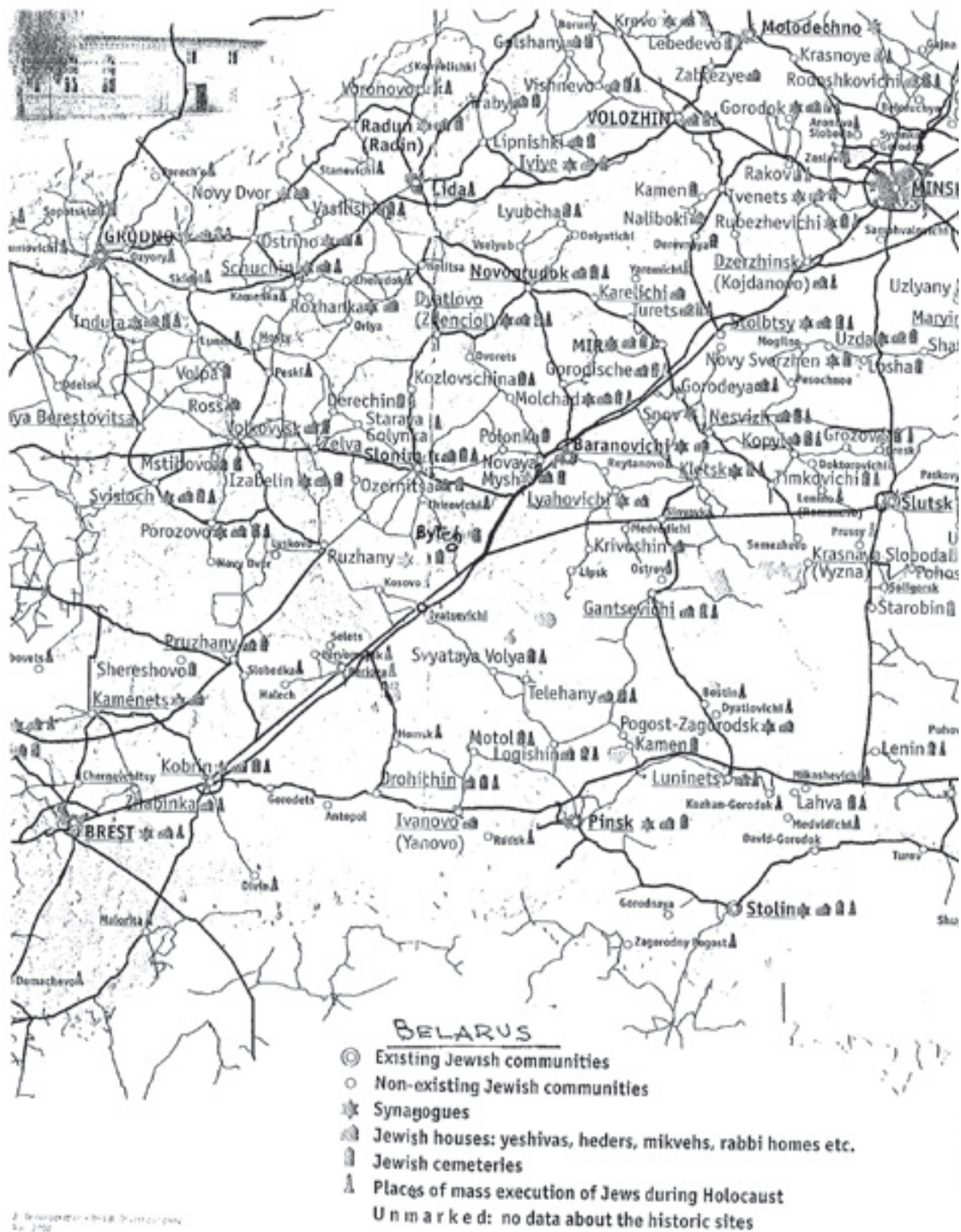


Figure 5: Union of Religious Congregations of Belarus Map

My father, Avraham (Abram) Zuchowicki, was a blacksmith and worked with his older brother, Schlazer (Ischlazer) Zuchowicki, a blacksmith in the village of Podstariny (Pasterine), Russia before WWI. My parents were very “frum” (religious, Orthodox) although not crazy frum. My uncle Schlazer was more “frum,” (very religious) and was a member of the Chevrah Kadisha (Jewish community burial society). He would always fast on the many Jewish fast days and would even sleep with a “yamulka” (kephah). He went to “Shul” (Synagogue) every day and his custom was to eat only two meals a day.



Figure 6: Village of Padstaryn (Pasterine)

My mother, Razel, was a housewife, the “balaboste” (in charge of the house), and cared for the family. She was the youngest of seven children (family tree). Before I was born, my maternal grandfather, Isroel Itchie Orlinski was elderly and became very ill. My mother took her then two young children and moved in with her father near Ruzhany, Russia. She cared for my grandfather for many months until he passed away in his home. His estate was mostly left to my mother that included his most important possession, his own Sefer Torah.

Before World War I, my mother’s oldest sister, Fradel (Orlinski), immigrated to Argentina. I believe they settled in Buenos Aires with her husband and two daughters, one of which was ill. My mother told me my aunt would often write to us saying that they had a large cattle ranch with so many cattle that they could not even count them all. They encouraged my father to join them in Argentina and then he could send for our family when he was settled. They were sure that my father would prosper in Argentina and even offered to send him ship passage and documents for Argentina. My father was not interested in immigrating to Argentina because he felt it was going to be too hot of a climate.

Fradel also sent money from Argentina for my mother and my mother’s older sister, Itchka (Itka) Orlinski Szpiner, who lived with her husband (Wulf) and six children in Bialystok. One time, Aunt Fradel’s letter and money was sent to my Aunt Itchka, who was to share the money with my mother but that did not occur. My mother learned about the funds in a future letter from Fradel and she decided not to mention that she knew about the missing money to Itka. My mother knew Itka was not financially well off and needed the funds more than my mother.



Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland, Inc. is an independent non-profit tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax-deductible in the U.S.A.

JRI Poland is hosted by Jevyid.com.

ORDERING RECORDS FROM THE POLISH STATE ARCHIVES

Searching for Surname SZPINER (D-M code 476900)

in Grodno Gubernia
in ALL data

Bialystok PSA Births 1888-1905 Marriages 1887-1905 Deaths 1888-90,92-94,97-1900,02,05 Grodno Gubernia / Bialystok Province (records in Fond 264 in Bialystok Archive) Located at 53°08' 23"09" Last updated May 2007								
Surname	Givenname	Year	Type	Akt	Father	Mother	Mothersurn	Remarks
SZPINER	Sroel Dawidowicz	1888	D	123				
SZPINER	Cielel	1900	B	147M	Wulf Mowszowicz	Ika Gerszowna		
SZPINER	Chana-Rywka Mowszowna	1900	D	273F				
ZOLTNER	Dawid Abramowicz	1900	M	266				
SZPINER	Majla / Majka Jedzidyjowna	1900	M	266				
ZOLTNER / ZOLTNER	Solomon	1901	B	511M	Dawid Abramowicz	Majla Jedzidyjowna	SZPINER	
SZPINER	Gilel	1902	B	74M	Wulf Mowszowicz	Ika Ika Iekowna	ORLINSKA	
ZOLTNER	Lifza	1903	B	211F	Dawid	Majla Jedzidyjowna	SZPINER	

Figure 7: Ika Orlinski Szpiner (Shpiner) from Bialystok, maternal aunt of Sara Zuchowicki.
Child born is ?Hillel vs Gilel. Jewish Record Indexing-Poland

My father also had the opportunity to immigrate to the United States two years before WWI but turned down that opportunity because he did not want to work on “Shabbos” (the Sabbath).

My father’s oldest brother, (? Simcha) Zuchowicki, from Byten, Russia had two sons [? Cheim Zuchowicki (Zax) and ? Chalavna Zuchowicki] that immigrated to America before WWI.

Another of my father’s older brothers, Shimon Zuchowicki, immigrated to London, England before WWI to avoid being drafted into the Russian army and changed his name to Simmons. After WWII when we were in Linz, Austria Shimon’s daughter, Sue, contacted us and sent us photos. Sue’s brother was in the British army during WWII and died in battle fighting the Germans.

As World War I broke out (1914), my father was drafted into the Russian Army and worked as a blacksmith in the back lines. As a blacksmith, he made extra money and bought and cooked his own food to keep kosher for the entire six years he was in the Russian Army. After my father was drafted into the Russian Army, the German Army was advancing east towards our village, Podstariny (Pasterine), Russia. The Russian Army was going to burn down houses including our home before the German Army would have occupied our village. My paternal uncle, Schlazer (Layzer) Zuchowicki, removed our possessions from our home and placed them in a horse drawn wagon. I was three years old and can still remember my uncle placing a burlap sack over the horse’s head to keep the horse calm and preventing the horse from jumping and rearing as the flames burned down our neighbor’s wooden homes. We initially moved in with my paternal aunt, my father’s sister, who was a widow and had three children in Kossow-Poleski, Russia. Our family of six, and her family of five, lived in her small two-room house for the next few months.



Figure 8: *Photo of Simcha Zuchovitzky (Zuchowicki) provided by Deborah Friedman, Zuchowicki/Zax family. Simcha was Zelig Zuchowicki father. (see Family tree in Appendix)*



Figure 9: *Shimon Zuchowicki with his? granddaughter – about 1950 in London England (see Family tree in Appendix)*

My mother always told me that my younger brother, Isroel Itchie, was a very bright child. When he was about 1½ year old and just beginning to talk he would make marks with his finger on the steamy indoor window during winter. My mother asked him, “What are you doing?” and he said, “I am writing a letter to my father!” During this difficult time, my younger brother, Isroel Itchie, and I developed measles. I had a very severe case of measles and my younger brother had a milder form. My mother thought I was going to die from the measles as it was so severe and I had trouble breathing. I survived but my two-year-old younger brother, Isroel Itchie, passed away in his sleep in 1916.

The German Army did occupy Kossow-Poleski (Kossov), Russia and displaced us West to Lomza in the winter of 1916. The German Army ordered our family to be ready to leave the town by 9 am the next day. My mother took down the frozen washed children’s clothing that was drying on the clothes line in the attic and placed them into “bindels” (bundles of clothing). My oldest sister, Leiba, went from one neighbor’s house to another to find some ink so my mother could label each “bindel” (bundle) of clothing. The next day the German soldiers came with a horse drawn covered canopy wagon and loaded us and our possessions. The German soldiers were nice to us and took off their fur coats and covered us because it was a bitter cold winter day. My mother told me, all of the children were so upset and started to cry and she told us, “don’t cry – your father is not here!” My mother had no idea where my father was or if he was alive. We were initially taken to a church and then to the train station and then transported to Lomza.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

The memorial book of Byten, Poland (which is close to the village of Podstariny and Kossov) documented that the German Army arrived in Byten during the winter of 1916. During the German occupation, some Jews were mobilized and sent to Vatsevitsh (Ivatsevichi). In our folk Yiddish language, we called the town Vatsevitsh although the official name was Ivatsevichi. The Jews were told that they were being sent to work in a marmalade (made from beets) factory. Instead, they were sent to Vatsevich (Vatsevitsh) for forced labor under the supervision of German gendarme, German military police. The Germans built a train station on the Moscow-Brest train line and a military base in Vatsevitsh. The majority of the village houses disappeared from the Russian house burnings and only a few houses remained. The Jewish and Russian prisoners were guarded by German police and were surrounded by barbed wire.⁴



Figure 10: Russian Empire during WWI (1914)

4 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramovitsh, 1954, p.115-127

Lomza, Russia/Poland: 1917 to 1920

When we were relocated to Lomza my mother brought along her father's Sefer Torah that was kept in a "kuffer" (chest). She never allowed us to sit on the chest that contained the Torah. My mother gave the Torah to the local synagogue for safekeeping and it was returned to us when we left Lomza.

I was 3½ years old in 1917 when we arrived in Lomza but I still clearly remember living in Lomza. At first, we lived in army barracks and slept on bunk beds because it was difficult to find an apartment. We stayed there for weeks and were given only bread and coffee to eat and the conditions were very difficult. Eventually the five of us moved into a one-room basement apartment with a tile oven in the center of the room. Since it was a basement apartment, occasionally some of the children that played in the street near our apartment would break our apartment window, that was at street level. To support our family my mother had to find a job. She worked for the Germans many kilometers away performing physically difficult work in road construction. My mother walked many kilometers with two other younger Jewish ladies, who were like sisters, and they stayed at the German work site for the entire week. One of the women, Feiga Polonski, from Kossow Poleski (Kossov) was the mother of my future sister-in-law, Sara Polonski Zuchowicki. The three women only returned to Lomza on Friday nights for "Shabbos" (the Sabbath) then returned to the work site on Saturday night. When they arrived in Lomza for "Shabbos" they would "bench" (bless) the "Shabbos licht" (lights) but when sundown was early they stopped along the way in a Jewish house that provided them candles, so they could "bench (bless) the Shabbos licht (lights)."

My oldest sister, Lieba, was only 12 years old and took care of us, instead of attending school, while our mother was away at work. Imagine how much responsibility my mother gave Lieba! My mother gave Lieba money to buy groceries and she cooked, cleaned, washed and cared for us. Lieba would always save a loaf of bread and kept it up high where I could not reach it, so my mother could see that we had enough food, even though we did not. We struggled; our basic diet was potatoes and bread. In time, my mother found a kitchen job in Lomza. She would bring home food and our situation greatly improved. I remember my mother kept a jar filled with "karshn" (cherries) in some "branfen" (whiskey) and occasionally she would give us one cherry if we were ill. She kept the jar high, so I could not reach it. My mother made me clothing using the inner linings from her dresses. Her dresses were made by her brother, Shimen-Aron (my mother called him Shiminorie) Orlinski,⁵ who was a famous womens dress designer and manufacturer in Slonim, Russia, and his dresses had many inner linings.

In time, I attended the local Polish kindergarten and then first grade in Lomza. I still remember I was served beets cooked with some fat, which I could not eat, even though I was hungry. When we arrived in Lomza, my middle sister, Chanah, was too young for school but she cried and carried on day after day because she wanted to attend school and pushed my mother to allow her to attend. My mother did ask the local public Polish school for a favor allowing Chanah to attend school, which was granted. Chanah attended the local Polish public school for three years and was an outstanding student from the onset. My brother Aron worked in a flour mill near our apartment and he had his Bar Mitzvah while we were in Lomza. He learned some Hebrew in Kossov before we were displaced to Lomza. Even though we struggled to make ends meet for food and rent, my mother hired a Rabbi. He came to our apartment for a few months to teach Aron in preparation for his Bar Mitzvah. Chanah would always listen to the Rabbi's Hebrew lessons as he taught Aron and she was able to learn almost as much as my brother.

When WWI ended in 1918 we did not know the whereabouts of my father or if he was alive. My mother was very concerned, and she was encouraged to go to a Jewish card fortuneteller to gain insight. The fortuneteller told her, believe me, your husband is alive and you will soon see him! At the same time my father was looking for us and posted many notices but received no information. My father was discharged from the Russian Army after six years and returned to Kossov where his sister lived. In Kossov other displaced Jewish families told him we were in Lomza. My father sent us a letter and in about a week or so he arrived in Lomza in 1920 or 1921. He was wearing a long Russian military coat and boots and the Polish police (Lomza was now Poland) arrested him. He told the police his family was in Lomza and my mother had to identify him before he was released from jail. He was required to register each week

5 Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List, Slonim

with the police while we were in Lomza. I was in first grade and my father had a pocket full of worthless Russian paper money that I used to play with.

rodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List



JewishGen

An affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

Home » Databases » Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters ListHome » Databases » Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List

Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List



Introducing the world's largest online collection of Jewish family history records.

ancestry.com
Discover »

Searching for Surname ORLINSKI

(D-M code 996645)

Number of hits: 20

Run on Tuesday 29 May 2012 at 13:17:35

Surname	Voter	Father	Residence	District	ID #
ORLINSKI	Shimen	Soul		Slonim	SL0a0569
ORLINSKI	Khatskel	Mendel		Slonim	SL0a0571
ORLINSKI	Bentzion	Yosel		Bialystok	BIAa3728
ORLINSKI	Isko Meir	Mendel		Bialystok	BIAa3729
ORLINSKI	Yankel	Bentzion		Bialystok	BIAa3730
ORLYANSKI	Elya		Pruzhany	Pruzhany	PRUbo664
ORLYANSKI	Abram Shlomo	Leizer		Bialystok	BIAa3731
ORLYANSKI	David	Mordko		Bialystok	BIAa3732
ORLYANSKI	Mordko Shmuel			Bialystok	BIAa3734
ORLYANSKI	Ovsei Leib	Abram Isko		Bialystok	BIAa3735

Figure 11: *Shimen Orlinski (line 1) from Slonim, 1912 Voters list, JewishGen*

In Lomza my father found a job working as a blacksmith for a lady who had four children and whose husband was a local blacksmith but had passed away. My father worked at her blacksmith shop and taught her oldest son, who was about 17 years old, as a blacksmith apprentice. My father split the profits with the lady, and we moved into a much nicer large room in her house. While working in Lomza my father and another blacksmith decided to become partners. They pooled and saved enough money over the next six months to purchase blacksmith equipment so they could start their own business.

CHAPTER II

LUBISHCHITSY (LYUBISHCHITSY), POLAND: 1921 TO 1939 BETWEEN WWI AND WWII “VATSEVITSH” (IVATSEVICH, IWACEWICZE, IVATSEVICHY, IVATZVITCH)



Figure 12: Poland between WWI and WWII



Figure 13: Iwatsewichi and Lubishchitsy, Poland

Our new home in Lubishchitsy, Poland

In late 1921 or early 1922 my parents decided to move from Lomza, Poland to the village of Lubishchitsy, Poland with my father's partner to start a blacksmith business. Lubishchitsy was in the pre-WWI area of our previous home but now it was Poland instead of Russia. Lubishchitsy was 7 kilometers from the town of Iwatsewichi (“Vatsevitsh”, Iwacewicze) and 17 km from Byten, and 20 km from Kossov.

During WWI, the Russian Army burned down most of the wooden houses in Lubishchitsy and the surrounding area as the German Army advanced. When we arrived by horse and wagon to the village of Lubishchitsy I only saw “sky and earth,” it was very barren, and life was difficult! There were only a few remaining wooden houses and one non-used school building, so we initially lived with my father's partner and family who had six children in one small house. As more and more refugees returned to Lubishchitsy they started to build wooden homes. Soon my father found an unoccupied large house and farm in Lubishchitsy that was owned by a physician during World War I. The elderly physician moved to Russia and my parents rented the house from his daughter who lived in a nearby village. My father wanted to buy the entire property that included farmland and a large orchard of pear, apple and cherry trees. The large house was in the rear of the property away from the road and the property included an underground cellar, barn, silo and outbuildings.



Figure 14: *Lubishchitsy, Belarus 2008 in the area of my parent's property*



Figure 15: *Lubishchitsy, Belarus 6/2018 in the area of my parent's property-Family heritage visit.*



Figure 16: *Orchard-cherry tree in Lubishchitsy 2018 in the area of my parent's property*

In order to obtain some funds to purchase the property my father sold my mother's Torah to a Jewish gentleman who had relatives in America. My mother was very, very upset about selling the Sefer Torah since it was her father's most important possession. Now that I look back at it; it was a miracle! At least this Torah survived and is being used "somewhere in the United States," otherwise it would have been burned with all of the other Torah's by the Germans during WWII.

Beyond the sale of the Torah my father obtained the backing of an investor to purchase the farm. My father established his blacksmith business on the property and we all worked the farm. Those first few years were very difficult, and the entire family worked very hard to maintain the farm and orchard and pay off the investor. My parents were ill early on, but everything improved in time and eventually we had a very comfortable life and lived very well until WWII.

When we moved to Lubishchitsy there was no school serving the village. Once a Polish school was established, I attended a total of three or four years of formal Polish education and had some private lessons. At the age of 10 or 11, my parents enrolled me and paid tuition in a Yiddish and Hebrew school in Byten. I stayed with my paternal uncle, Schlazer Zuchowicki, and family and studied for two years. Even though I learned a lot I preferred to stay home. I was able to read, write and speak Polish and Yiddish. I spoke Russian and read and spoke some Hebrew. At home we mostly spoke Yiddish. My mother frequently visited me and at times my father also would visit me in Byten. The other school children always remarked how handsome my father was.

As the years went on, maybe three or four years, our family's finances improved so my father decided to sell the farmland back to the investor because he did not want to work the farm any more. What remained was still a large property that included the large house with its many shade trees, a bathing house, stone cellar, barn and silo. The blacksmith shop was on our property, across the way from the house. We also kept the orchards and enough land for a very large garden. Our house and property were like a "Dacha" (a large Russian country house). The house was old but was very large and made from solid timbers located in the rear of the property away from road and was surrounded with many shade trees. The house had 5 main rooms including a large living room, a long hall and a large kitchen with

a long table and a large oven and stove. The separate large underground cellar was lined with stone and topped with a metal roof. That became the floor for the cabin that we built over it. We kept potatoes, meat, dried pears, and other foods in this cellar for the winter. We had a well and a separate washhouse where we heated the well water for bathing. We had a barn with 1-2 horses, 3 or 4 cows, chickens, ducks and twelve geese. We also had bicycles, wagons and sleds.

Our relatives would stay with us for weeks or for the entire summer. My mother's sister, Itka Orlinski Szpiner, and her family from Bialystok, Poland were frequent guests. Our large garden produced many tomatoes, cucumbers and other vegetables. We had a lot of fruit from our orchard including, apples, pears, and cherries. Most summers we would have so many pears that my mother would dry the pears in the oven and fill a large sack of these dried pears which were stored in our cellar each winter. We also made jellies from our cherries and pears.

As my parent's financial situation improved they hired workers to care for the grounds including the garden that surrounded our home. Our neighbor's young girl worked for us during the week cleaning our house. I was not always happy with the work she did so I would rewash the floors when she left.

My father's blacksmith shop was across the way from our house and my brother Aron worked with my father. My father would also have one or two young blacksmith apprentices. They worked for three or four years and were provided room and board on our property. In total, there would be at least 3 people working for my father in our blacksmith shop at any given time and his business did well. My uncle, Schlazer (Lazer) Zuchowicki, also a blacksmith, always remarked to my father "why are you training so many blacksmiths as competition?" My father always had enough work and he was not concerned. He was a very good businessman and he was paid for his blacksmith services in cash ("Zlotys"), credit, or in exchange for goods, materials or services. On Sundays, my father would try to collect from people who took credit.

My father also obtained Polish government contracts to remove timbers out of the nearby forest during the winter by horse drawn sled and he delivered them to the train station in Vatsevitsh. Each winter he had 2-3 months to fulfill the contract and the Polish government paid him. In the spring and fall there was too many "blottes" (swamp areas) in the forest so he could not bring out the logs. He would hire locals in the winter to do the work and many of them worked for him to pay off their credit from his blacksmith business.

My father was occasionally given contracts for building houses for individuals and again laborers worked for him in repayment of the credit they owed. He almost made more as a businessman then from his blacksmith shop.

Before my oldest sister Leiba was married she operated a small general store in our house in Lubishchitsy. She sold salt, sugar, kerosene, grease for wagon wheels, thread, buttons, needles and many other items. Many purchased items on credit and repaid us by working for my father.

Ivatsevichi, Poland (Vatsevitsh, Iwacewicze, Ivatsevichy, Ivatzvitch)

Ivatsevichi was seven kilometers from Lubishchitsy. Even though it was spelled Ivatsevichi, we and the locals called the town "Vatsevitsh". During WWI, the German's established a train stop and station in Vatsevich along the Brest-Moscow rail line.⁶ After WWI, a Polish estate sold lots in Vatsevitsh and it became a beautiful new modern town with streets laid out in parallel with sidewalks and flowerbeds along the sidewalks. The main sha'she (road) ran along the path of the Brest-Moscow road and the town was located on the Grivda River. The majority of houses in Vatsevitsh were constructed from solid wood timbers that came from the nearby forests. Later some brick construction occurred. The town consisted of Belarusian's, Poles and Jews. The main industries in Vatsevitsh were forestry, a sawmill, as well as rural farms. Wood timbers were brought in from the surrounding forest by sled during the winter because the "blottes" were difficult to work in during the other seasons. At the rail station in Vatsevitsh the logs were transported out on flatbed trains.

⁶ Constructed in 1871, FEEFHS Journal, Volume XIV, p.76



Figure 17: *Ivatsevichi 1929*⁷



Figure 18: *Ivatsevichi rail station 1930*⁸



Figure 19: *Ivatsevichi wedding 1914*⁹

7 Photo from Sara Kopeliansky Weis, daughter of Lipe(Ben-Zion) Kopeliansky

8 Photo from Sara Kopeliansky Weis, daughter of Lipe Kopeliansky

9 Photo from Sara Kopeliansky Weis, daughter of Lipe Kopeliansky



Figure 20: *Theater-cultural building in Ivatsevichi prior to WWII*¹⁰



Figure 21: *Kerosene building in Ivatsevichi prior to WWII*¹¹

¹⁰ Photo from Sara Kopeliansky Weis, daughter of Lipe Kopeliansky

¹¹ Photo from Sara Kopeliansky Weis, daughter of Lipe Kopeliansky



Figure 22: *Ivatsevichi* 1929¹²



Figure 23: *Ivatsevichi* 1914¹³

12 Photo from Sara Kopeliansky Weis, daughter of Lipe Kopeliansky

13 Photo from Sara Kopeliansky Weis, daughter of Lipe Kopeliansky



Figure 24: *Ivatsevichi, Belarus 2008*



Figure 25: *Ivatsevichi, Belarus administration building 2008*



Figure 26: *Ivatsevichi, Belarus train station 2008*



Figure 27: *Ivatsevichi, Belarus 2008*

Jewish life between WWI and WWII

Anti-Semitism was not a problem for us! My father was well known in the towns of Lubishchitsy, Vatsvitsh, Byten, and Kossov and was very well liked and respected as an honorable and honest person who kept his word. The Jewish community called him “Avraham or Abram” and the non-Jewish community called him “Abranko” (in Russian). He would help anyone in need, Jews and Christians. Everyone loved my father and the locals in Lubishchitsy only entrusted their money with my father for safekeeping when they worked in the local forest or fields. There was no bank in the village, so my father acted as the local banker if individuals in the village needed a loan or credit. If individuals needed money and my father did not have enough, he would borrow the money and give it to those that needed help. Even if my mother would question my father asking- what are you doing? - he still reached out and helped the individuals in need. Some repaid him and others did not or could not.

My parents were often invited to local non-Jewish weddings and celebrations. Since we were kosher my parents would bring along their own hard-boiled eggs wrapped in a cloth and my father’s “kiddishke” (shot glass) to drink vodka with everyone. It was never a problem. Yiddish was spoken in our home and with other Jews otherwise we spoke Polish or Russian.

Vatsevitsh had a small hotel owned by Jews. When a poor Jewish traveler needed a place to stay overnight the Rabbi (Rakhman) would recommend the traveler to go to our house, “a gutten Yid” (a good Jew) will take you in. My parents would never turn anyone away, Jewish or Christian that needed food or a place to sleep. Even if my mother would occasionally complain about all the visitors, my father would tell us all, “I remember when I was in the Russian army during WWI and I had no place to sleep or food to eat! We need to help others with food and shelter, if we can”.

By the early 1930’s Lubishchitsy had grown to become a larger village with 4 or 5 streets and had about five Jewish families. At the same time, Vatsvitsh was expanding as a beautiful modern town and an increasing Jewish community, so the two communities acted as one Jewish community. We had a very good time with the boys and girls, and we always had Jewish visitors and friends in our home. I would either walk or ride my bike, and sometimes by horse and wagon or horse-drawn sled in the winter, to Vatsvitsh. Before WWII Vatsvitsh had an active Jewish community with its own Rabbi (Rakhman), a small “shul” (synagogue) and “sachet” (kosher slaughtering). There was no Jewish cemetery in the town, therefore burials took place at the Jewish cemetery in Kossov or Byten. Tutors taught Hebrew and there was a Polish school.

We were all “frum,” but not crazy. We kept “Shabbos” (Sabbath) and had a very religious life. We kept kosher with “milchig” (milk), “freishig” (meat) and “pareve” (neither milk or meat) dishes. My father would “davon” (pray) three times a day. In the morning, my father would put on his “Tallis” and “Tefillin” and would sing “zemiron.” He would davon outside for “Rosh Hodesh” (the new month) when the new moon crescent would appear. On “Shabbos,” weather permitting, my parents would walk to the Shul in Vatsvitsh. At other times, we would have a “minyan” (10 men quorum) in our large home. Either my father, or one of the two younger neighbor boys who had beautiful voices, would “davon.” My father would “daven” (chant) the entire service including the “Torah” and “Haftarah” service, but we did not have our own Torah, but we had “Siddurs” (prayer books) and “Chumashes” (Bibles).

Before there was a ‘Shul’ (synagogue) in Vatsvitsh my parents would travel to Byten or Kossov for “yontive” (Jewish holidays). There were also times when my parents would hire a “Baal Tefela” (special reader to chant the service) for the holidays in our home for the local Jews.

My mother worked very hard caring for the family and home especially in preparation for “Shabbos” (Sabbath). My mother would typically get up between 4-5 o’clock in the morning on Friday to start baking challah and kugels (egg noodle or potato casserole) for Shabbos. She would also make gefilte fish (poached fish), chicken soup, vegetables and roasted chicken. She also made her own butter and cheese. We would buy honey from our neighbor. Food and fruit were never a problem. We had a very comfortable life.



Figure 28: *Betar Zionist training program, Ivatsevichi sawmill 1930¹⁴*



Figure 29: *Betar Zionist training program, Ivatsevichi 1930¹⁵*

14 Ghetto Fighters House archives, Israel

15 Ghetto Fighters House archives, Israel



Figure 30: *Byten, Belarus Jewish cemetery dating back to 18th century, 2008*



Figure 31: *Byten Jewish cemetery, 2008 (No Jews were living in Byten in 2008)*

“Shabbas was Shabbas”!! We would all bathe in our bathhouse and dress for Shabbas. On Friday night, my mother would “bench” the “Shabbas licht” (candles) and my father would say “kiddish and motzi”. On Shabbos morning, we would have coffee and milk that had turned brown because it was left in the oven overnight. After morning services, we would take out the cooked “chont” (“cholent”), (stewpot containing meat, potatoes, beans) that was placed in the oven before Shabbas on Friday night. My mother was a very good cook and when I got married, Yankel told me that he liked my mother’s “chont” much better than his mother’s “chont.”

For Shabbos, our non-Jewish neighbor girl worked for us and was paid well. She would turn on the lights, kept the oven burning with wood logs and milked the cows.

The “shachet” (kosher slaughterer) from Vatsevitsh performed our Jewish religious slaughtering. He would slaughter a cow during the winter and stored the meat in a barrel with a lot of salt outside during the long cold winter or in our stone cellar. The Grivda River was very close, and we had a lot of fish even more than meat, especially in the warmer months.

For Sukkot, we would drop down a wood frame in the back of the house, near the rear door and we would cover the top with green branches, which became our Sukkah. Occasionally we would eat in the Sukkah, weather permitting, otherwise, my father would just say ‘kiddish’ (blessing over wine) in the Sukkah. He would purchase an “Etrog” (citrus fruit) and “Luluv” (willow, myrtle and palm branches) from Kossov, and “bench” them in the Sukkah.

In the summer of 1936, a young Jewish engineering student from Warsaw arrived in Vatsevitsh to help build a concrete and wood bridge across the Grivda River. The bridge was on the main road from Brest to Moscow in Vatsevitsh. My sister Lieba and her husband Beryl Bassar rented their rental property, a four-room house in Lubishchitsy on my parent’s property, to the engineer. The engineer’s wife would visit him from time to time. Although the student engineer was Jewish, he was not an observant Jew. His mother was a physician and his father was an engineer. My parents invited the Jewish engineering student for “Shabbos” dinner, but he did not dress or wash, as we did for Shabbos. He noticed how special “Shabbos” was in our home. The next Shabbos he was again invited, but this time he washed in our washhouse and dressed as we did in preparation for Shabbos. As I spoke to him, he told me how envious he was of our life and lifestyle in our village. At that time, even with a limited education I was already operating a general store in my parent’s house and I was able to make a living. He told me, even when he gets his degree in engineering it will be difficult for him to obtain a job as an engineer.

My Family¹⁶

My father, Abram, was handsome, almost 6ft. tall, slender, blue eyes and had a very clear complexion and a very short well-trimmed beard and always wore a hat. My mother, Razel, was a little taller than I am now, about 5ft. 6inch, thin and had black hair and brown eyes and was very pretty. They were both very soft-spoken and if I misbehaved as a child, one look from my mother was all that it took to discipline me. I looked more like my father as I have his blue eyes. My siblings were all soft spoken and my parents were our role models.

In about 1931 my parents wanted my sister Chanah and I to obtain training as a seamstress. We stayed with my mother’s older sister, Itchka Orlinski Szpiner, her husband (Wulf) and their six children¹⁷ in Bialystok, Poland during the winter, from October to March. Tante (Aunt) Itcha was a seamstress and taught us to measure, cut and sew clothing as apprentices. Unfortunately, during our time with our aunt her business was very slow, so we had limited experience, but we did learn. Her husband (Wulf) worked in a factory and they struggled financially. When Chanah, and I returned to Lubishchitsy my father was very upset that we had picked up some very bad habits from our cousins. They were not as frum as us and they would turn lights on and off on Shabbos. We still were very close with them and Itka and her family would stay with us during the summer and sometimes the entire summer.

16 Family Tree-Appendix

17 Bialystock Birth records 1902 Gilel Szpiner; (? Hillel); mother-Itka (Appendix)

Lieba was my oldest sister and was born in 1902. In the late 1920s Lieba was on the edge of a stream and accidentally slipped in. She was emotionally shaken and traumatized. Afterwards, she had emotional problems and stopped eating. After evaluation by the local doctor (Dr. Koslovski) in Vatsevitsh my father felt she needed further care. My father was told that she would get the best care in Warsaw and my first cousin, Avraham Orlinski, from Slonim was studying engineering in Warsaw. My father took Lieba by train and secured loans to pay for her health care in Warsaw. In about a month my father visited Lieba in Warsaw and he was very upset. Lieba did not look well and was not improving. He was told that she would do better at home and he took her home by train. On the way home Lieba was not herself and grabbed a sandwich from a stranger. My father apologized and it was not an issue. At home, she regained her appetite and her emotional and physical health improved to normal. She was physically and emotionally well until the time of the Shoah.

Lieba operated a successful general store from my parent's house before she was married, and I took over her store after she was married. She married Beryl Basser and my parents bought her a house in Lubishchitsy as a wedding gift. She then opened and operated a larger general store in her own house, which was on the main street of Lubishchitsy. She sold cloth, buttons, thread, needles, sugar, salt, kerosene, grease, and "kalch" (white wash paint) and many other items. In time, she expanded her store and was able to obtain a license to sell vodka and tobacco. Lieba was the driving force for the store and Beryl helped her. As an investment Beryl and Lieba bought a house from my parents that was on my parent's property near the road. Lieba and Beryl rented the house to a Jewish engineering student in 1936 for about a year. Later they moved the wood house from Lubishchitsy to a lot they purchased in Vatsevitsh and continued to rent the house. Lieba had three children, Baele, a girl, was born in 1930, Isroel Iechie, named after my mother's father, was born in 1934, and the third child was a boy, born in 1938.

Chanah, my middle sister, was born in 1909. She was very bright and was a gifted student. She had some training as a seamstress in Byten then with Aunt Itchka. In the 1920's her abdomen slowly become distended and she would often have heartburn. During one of my walks to Vatsevitsh with Chanah she developed severe abdominal pain. My sister Lieba took her to a doctor in Kossov but he did not know what was wrong with her. The next day, Lieba or my mother took Chanah to see a gynecologist in Baranovich, which was a larger town and where we had cousins. The doctor told them that she must go right away to either Vilna or Warsaw and said, "you will be very fortunate once you are on the operating room table." They returned home and my father immediately borrowed about \$20.00, which was a lot of money at the time, from a neighbor that had just came back from America. Lieba or my parents took her by train to Warsaw, and they stayed with our cousin, Avraham Orlinski. Chanah was immediately scheduled for surgery and a large (over 9 pounds), "vasser guza" (ovarian cyst) was removed. She did well and returned home by train in about one week and had no further problems.

Chanah had a beautiful clear complexion and was married at the age of 18, which was very young, to Chaim Utschstein. Chaim was also 18 and was required to serve two years in the Polish army. When he returned from military service, they lived with his parents in one room and both his and our family helped them get settled. His parents bought land in Vatsevitsh and my parents built them a house. I even gave them '300 zlotest' because they needed help. Chanah was a very talented seamstress and she made a good living sewing dresses, shirts and blouses. Chaim was a blacksmith in Vatsevitsh and also did well. They had three children. Two boys, Noeskie (Nossen) was born in 1936 and Yosef (Joseph) was born in 1939. A baby girl was born in the Vatsevitsh ghetto in 1942 during the German occupation.

My brother, Aron, was born on June 5, 1907. He was handsome, well built, strong, and had dark hair and looked more like my mother. At the age of 18 he served in the Polish army for two years in the infantry. Anti-Semitism was present in the Polish army and if he tried not to eat what was served, like pork, the other soldiers would stick his head into the plate. He soon learned he had no choice and had to eat what was served even though we were kosher. My brother was a skilled blacksmith and worked with our father. He once entered a blacksmith contest and won first place in a horse-shoeing competition. He was the last sibling to get married. He married Ethel, a beautiful blond young lady, at the time of the Russian occupation in 1939. Aron and Ethel lived with my parents in Lubishchitsy and Ethel got along with our parents, which was very important to my brother. They had two daughters, Lieba was born in early 1941 during the Russian occupation and the second daughter was born in 1942 during the German occupation.

Marriage: August 3, 1938

I had many girlfriends and boyfriends and I was in no rush to get married. I would never pressure any boy to get married even if I was interested in them. One of my boyfriends lived in the town of Bereza-Kartuska, Poland. I was fortunate not to marry him since the Germans killed all the Jews in Bereza-Kartuska in 1942 and no one survived. My father advised me to always look for a husband with a profession or trade that had skills. He said, in bad times, you can always make a living if you have a trade or profession. Real money is what you earn, not money that you inherit or receive as a dowry.

In 1937 my sister Chanah and her neighbor in Vatsevitsh were walking with their young children discussing a “shidach” (shidduch, matchmaking) for me. My sister’s neighbor knew Yankel (Jakob) Rosjanski from Zelva, Poland very well and in fact she was in love with him but Yankel’s mother did not approve of her. My neighbor in Lubishchitsy was also from Zelva and knew Yankel very well. My sister’s neighbor wrote Yankel about me and I first met him in Slonim, Poland in 1937. Yankel was born in July 5, 1909 and was tall, handsome, had dark hair and eyes and was very bright. We “spatsiered” (strolled), through the town and had tea and “pregelty karchens” (sautéed cherries) at my maternal aunt’s (Mery Orlinski) house in Slonim, and we had a very good time. We met in Slonim a few more times and then he met my family a few times in Lubishchitsy. I visited Yankel and his parents, Dushe and Aron Rosjanski and his younger sister, Shayna Chaya, who was not married, in Zelva. I also met his older sister, Chanah Laya and her family in her home near Volkovysk, Poland. She was also beautiful and had two boys and one girl and her husband was a cap maker. Yankel’s mother, Dushe Zlotnicki (Slotnick) Rosjanski, visited us in Lubishchitsy and was an unusually beautiful tall woman and had a natural red-cheeked complexion. Yankel was orthodox and was well educated in Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish and some Russian and attended the Tarbut School studying Hebrew and Yiddish and the local Polish school in Zelva. He enjoyed reading Yiddish and Hebrew books. We wrote each other in Yiddish and Yankel’s letters were very beautiful and poetic. Yankel was a cap maker, fur and cloth caps, and he would travel to Lodz and Bialystok, Poland to purchase material.



Figure 32: *Jacob Rosjanski (second row from top, fifth from left) 1930, Po'alie Zion political party in Zelva*¹⁸

Yankel’s father, Aron Rosjanski, was a shoemaker in Zelva. Yankel’s parents had many relatives who immigrated to America and his father, Aron Rosjanski, sailed to America (April 1921¹⁹) to establish a new life. Unfortunately, he could not make a living and his wife, Dushe, had to send funds to him so he could return to Europe. Yankel’s younger sister, Shana Chaya, was born about 1923 after his father returned from America and she lived with her parents in Zelva. We were soon engaged to be married and our wedding plans began.

¹⁸ Ghetto Fighters House archives, Israel

¹⁹ Ship, Susquehanna (Appendix)

In preparation for our marriage I purchased fabric, down, feathers, hand and machine-made pillows, down comforters, linens, bedding, tablecloths and placed the finished items in a large “kuffer” (chest). I went shopping in Vatsevitsh, Byten, but mostly in Kosow-Poleski. The store owners would offer me the best material and goods. They knew I could afford it and they would say, “you can always pay me later.” I would even vouch for my friend’s credit and the shopkeepers knew that I would pay them back even if my friend would not or could not.

I was 25 and Yankel was 29 when we were married on Tuesday, August 3, 1938 at my parent’s home in Lubishchitsy, Poland. The Chuppah was set outside, which was customary, and the Rabbi (Rakhman) from Vatsevitsh (Ivatsevichi) officiated. My parents escorted me to the Chuppah, and I wore a flowered patterned silk dress, not a white dress, and had a white veil. I circled Yankel seven times as was customary in Europe. There were 50 to 60 guests, which was a lot of guests at that time. Yankel’s parents and sisters and family were there. We had many relatives, uncles, aunts, and cousins from Slonim, Byten, Kossov, Ruzhany and Bialystok as well as neighbors. My honored guest was my elderly maternal aunt (Mari Orlinski) from Slonim who did not attend my sister’s weddings. Her husband, my mother’s brother was Shimen-Aron Orlinski,²⁰ but I called him Shiminorie. He was a famous ladies clothing designer and manufacturer and was deceased. My parents hired a woman from Byten that catered the wedding and she also catered my sisters’ weddings. She arrived a week ahead of the wedding and my cousin helped during the wedding meal. She prepared a very special “flashick” (meat) dinner and we sat at long tables. My parents hired a four-piece klezmer musical band from Byten that including a fiddler.²¹ Before the wedding my parents gave me a gift, a four-room house in Vatsevitsh, 18 Rosjanski, which was across the street from my sister, Chanah Utschtein, on the main street. My parents also purchased beautiful new furniture as a wedding gift that included a small couch, a dining room table with four chairs, a china buffet and two beds. My sister gave us special tall silver candlesticks for Shabbos. My aunt from Slonim gave us a crystal decanter set with matching small glasses. I received many other gifts including silverware and dishes.

My parents suggested that we stay with them in Lubishchitsy after we were married and rent our house in Vatsevitsh in order to save money. We did live with my parents in Lubishchitsy and rented out our house to a veterinary doctor. Yankel liked my parents and enjoyed being with them. Yankel made a living by manufacturing caps and hats with a hat sewing machine that he owned. He worked out of my parent’s house and he had contracts with a local school for caps as part of the school uniform. He was able to obtain the school contract by paying the teacher 10 or 20 Zlotes. He also sold caps in the Vatsevitsh marketplace. After we were married, I continued to operate my general store and also sold blouses and housecoats that I made. We made a very good living.

Overall Lubishchitsy was a poor village and many of the villagers did not have money. We would sell them items on credit or bartered in exchange for items like eggs, which we would sell or in exchange for services they would provide. When Yankel was not working he would constantly read 2 to 3 Yiddish books on literature or politics or the Yiddish “gazettes” (newspapers). There was a large Yiddish library in Kossov where he obtained his books.

From WWI to WWII Vatsevitsh continued to grow and was a beautiful modern town with 5 to 6 main streets with other side streets with a total population of 500 to 600 of which 100 to 150 were Jews. In 1939, Yankel and I were preparing to open a large general store and to sell caps and hats from our house, 18 Rosjanski, in Vatsevitsh. We had tables, shelves and cabinets made for our future store.

²⁰ Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List, Slonim (Appendix)

²¹ Sara Ross testimony and Destruction of Slonim Jewery, Alpert, p.370-375; The Jewish musician’s daughter, Lyuba Abramovich, was a very good Yiddish actress in Byten plays and survived with us in the Volcha Nory forest. She testified in the trial of Gerhardt Erren in 1972. She lived in Minsk after the war and flew to Hamburg for the trial.

Form No. 1
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION

List No. 25418

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE

Passengers sailing from DANZIG on MARCH 12

ALL ALIENS coming to a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving at a port of call insular possessions from a foreign port

No. of Passenger	Family name	Given name	Age	Sex	Calling or occupation	Religion	Nationality (Country of birth, unless naturalized)	Place of birth	Country	City or town	The name and complete address of nearest relative or friend in country whence alien came
0950	BAKH	TAJBA	40	F	WIFE	RUSSIAN	POLISH	BERNEN	POLAND	PLAGE	WITKA, SILVER
0951	CHAGIA		18	F	CLERK	THE	BERNEN	THE			UNCLE
0952	TERA		2	F	WIFE						
0953	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0954	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0955	ELONARSKA	ELKA	40	F	WIFE	THE	BERNEN	THE			ACQUAINTANCE: MICHAEL ALPHEUS, BERNEN
0956	CHAGIA		17	F	WIFE						
0957	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0958	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0959	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0960	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0961	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0962	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0963	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0964	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0965	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0966	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0967	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0968	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0969	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0970	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0971	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0972	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0973	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0974	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0975	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0976	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0977	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0978	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0979	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0980	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0981	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0982	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0983	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0984	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0985	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0986	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0987	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0988	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0989	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0990	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0991	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0992	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0993	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0994	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0995	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0996	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0997	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0998	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						
0999	CHAGIA		18	F	WIFE						

Handwritten notes: *18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-1226-1227-1228-1229-1230-1231-1232-1233-1234-1235-1236-1237-1238-1239-1240-1241-1242-1243-1244-1245-1246-1247-1248-1249-1250-1251-1252-1253-1254-1255-1256-1257-1258-1259-1260-1261-1262-1263-1264-1265-1266-1267-1268-1269-1270-1271-1272-1273-1274-1275-1276-1277-1278-1279-1280-1281-1282-1283-1284-1285-1286-1287-1288-1289-1290-1291-1292-1293-1294-1295-1296-1297-1298-1299-1300-1301-1302-1303-1304-1305-1306-1307-1308-1309-1310-1311-1312-1313-1314-1315-1316-1317-1318-1319-1320-1321-1322-1323-1324-1325-1326-1327-1328-1329-1330-1331-1332-1333-1334-1335-1336-1337-1338-1339-1340-1341-1342-1343-1344-1345-1346-1347-1348-1349-1350-1351-1352-1353-1354-1355-1356-1357-1358-1359-1360-1361-1362-1363-1364-1365-1366-1367-1368-1369-1370-1371-1372-1373-1374-1375-1376-1377-1378-1379-1380-1381-1382-1383-1384-1385-1386-1387-1388-1389-1390-1391-1392-1393-1394-1395-1396-1397-1398-1399-1400-1401-1402-1403-1404-1405-1406-1407-1408-1409-1410-1411-1412-1413-1414-1415-1416-1417-1418-1419-1420-1421-1422-1423-1424-1425-1426-1427-1428-1429-1430-1431-1432-1433-1434-1435-1436-1437-1438-1439-1440-1441-1442-1443-1444-1445-1446-1447-1448-1449-1450-1451-1452-1453-1454-1455-1456-1457-1458-1459-1460-1461-1462-1463-1464-1465-1466-1467-1468-1469-1470-1471-1472-1473-1474-1475-1476-1477-1478-1479-1480-1481-1482-1483-1484-1485-1486-1487-1488-1489-1490-1491-1492-1493-1494-1495-1496-1497-1498-1499-1500-1501-1502-1503-1504-1505-1506-1507-1508-1509-1510-1511-1512-1513-1514-1515-1516-1517-1518-1519-1520-1521-1522-1523-1524-1525-1526-1527-1528-1529-1530-1531-1532-1533-1534-1535-1536-1537-1538-1539-1540-1541-1542-1543-1544-1545-1546-1547-1548-1549-1550-1551-1552-1553-1554-1555-1556-1557-1558-1559-1560-1561-1562-1563-1564-1565-1566-1567-1568-1569-1570-1571-1572-1573-1574-1575-1576-1577-1578-1579-1580-1581-1582-1583-1584-1585-1586-1587-1588-1589-1590-1591-1592-1593-1594-1595-1596-1597-1598-1599-1600-1601-1602-1603-1604-1605-1606-1607-1608-1609-1610-1611-1612-1613-1614-1615-1616-1617-1618-1619-1620-1621-1622-1623-1624-1625-1626-1627-1628-1629-1630-1631-1632-1633-1634-1635-1636-1637-1638-1639-1640-1641-1642-1643-1644-1645-1646-1647-1648-1649-1650-1651-1652-1653-1654-1655-1656-1657-1658-1659-1660-1661-1662-1663-1664-1665-1666-1667-1668-1669-1670-1671-1672-1673-1674-1675-1676-1677-1678-1679-1680-1681-1682-1683-1684-1685-1686-1687-1688-1689-1690-1691-1692-1693-1694-1695-1696-1697-1698-1699-1700-1701-1702-1703-1704-1705-1706-1707-1708-1709-1710-1711-1712-1713-1714-1715-1716-1717-1718-1719-1720-1721-1722-1723-1724-1725-1726-1727-1728-1729-1730-1731-1732-1733-1734-1735-1736-1737-1738-1739-1740-1741-1742-1743-1744-1745-1746-1747-1748-1749-1750-1751-1752-1753-1754-1755-1756-1757-1758-1759-1760-1761-1762-1763-1764-1765-1766-1767-1768-1769-1770-1771-1772-1773-1774-1775-1776-1777-1778-1779-1780-1781-1782-1783-1784-1785-1786-1787-1788-1789-1790-1791-1792-17*



Figure 34: USHMM map – Ribbentrop-Molotov pact

CHAPTER III

RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF POLAND

WWII September 1939 to June 1941 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact

From 1938 to early 1939, through newspaper articles and first-hand accounts from travelers that were moving east we knew there was already tumult and unrest in Germany. In early 1939, one Jewish family from Germany came through our town by horse and wagon heading east to Russia. They told about the loss of Jewish civil rights and jobs, and that Germany was preparing for war. I remembered World War I when the German army occupied us and displaced us from our home, but they did not kill Jews. It was not unusual for us to hear about German unrest and we were concerned! We knew the Polish Army was getting ready for war and were enlisting 18 to 20-year-old boys.

I clearly remember the start of World War II (September 17, 1939). Planes were overhead and bombs were dropped near the rail line then Russian foot soldiers arrived in Vatsevitsh (Ivatsevichi, Iwacewiece), Poland. The entire town welcomed the Russian soldiers as they marched through the main “sheshie” (street) of Vatsevitsh by throwing flowers, field grasses, and waving at the soldiers. In fact, that day I was holding my nephew, Isroel Itchiek Utschtein, as the soldiers marched by. I was 26 years old, and Yankel was 30 years old.

Vatsevitsh was important because it was located on the main road that ran from Brest to Minsk to Moscow. The Russian (Red) Army occupied the eastern half of Poland and the German Army occupied the western half of Poland (Ribbentrop-Molotov pact) and the border was along the Bug River at Breast, Poland which was just west of us (90 miles).



Figure 35: *Greeting sign for the Red Army at the dividing line at the German Border near Brest-Litovsk or Ivatsevichi (Iwacewicz), Poland.²²*

²² Yad Vashem photo archive #100748

When the Russian army occupied us, Yankel and I made the decision to leave my parents' home and move into our house, 18 Rosjanski, in Vatsevitsh. We felt that the Russians could have considered our tenants the owners of our house, so Yankel went to the Russian authorities and told them we owned the house and wanted to stay in it. We could not displace our tenant, so we lived in our house together. Our tenant was a veterinarian with his wife and two daughters. Our house had 4 main rooms and a garden. Our tenant occupied one room and we occupied two rooms and we both shared the kitchen which had a stove and a separate oven to bake bread. We moved our furniture to Vatssevitsh, but we did not open our planned general store in our house because of the Russian occupation and our tenant. In Vatssevitsh we had neighbors, Kravetsky, Dopereilo and a physician, Dr. Koslovski. Under the Russian occupation life was livable but restricted. Yankel visited his parents in Zelva for about two weeks during the Russian occupation.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

*During the Russian occupation ... the social and cultural life of our Jewish population in Byten (near Ivatsevichi) was liquidated. All of the Jewish institutions, from the library to the charitable organizations, were disbanded. The Zionist groups stopped their activity. People who mentioned Zionism were sent to Siberia.*²³

During the Russian occupation in 1939 to 1941 there were about 50 to 60 Russian soldiers in Vatssevitsh. An airstrip was established, and planes were located in an open field outside of Vatssevitsh. Initially, when the Russian soldiers arrived, local hoodlums or possibly Russian soldiers looted my small general store in my parent's home, and my sister Lieba's large general store in Lubishchitsy. They took everything even down to the last bar of soap. They also ransacked and took all of the caps that Yankel made which were stored in a shed. Yankel traveled to Kossov and made an official complaint to the Russian authority and they ordered that Yankel's caps be returned which was done, but not the store's contents. Lieba's general store was quite large and the Russian authorities had her and Beryl on a list to be deported to Siberia because they were too entrepreneurial. Looking back at it now, I wish they had been deported to Siberia and possibly they would have survived the war. Other individuals were deported to Siberia.

Overall, our families were able to live under the Russian occupation fairly well but had restrictions. My father, my brother Aron and brother-in-law Chaim, were blacksmiths, and continued to work and make a living. Yankel worked from our house making hats and sold them mostly through bartering for food. The small "shul," (synagogue) was controlled but unofficially used. Vatssevitsh did have its own police and fire department and the Russian Army established a hospital. They would show movies from a truck outdoors near the train station for everyone. The Russian soldiers would even escort the boys and girls home from the movie for safety reasons. There were dances and young Jews would participate. Occasionally, you would see an automobile pass by in the town and a few individuals in town had motorcycles.

My son Schmuel (Samuel) Rosjanski was born in April, 1941 in my parent's home in Lubishchitsy and a Russian midwife assisted with the delivery. He was named after Yankel's (?) paternal grandfather.

The Russian soldiers in Vatssevitsh would often sing a song called "Katushka" (a Russian love song). One day my sister, Chanahs younger son Yosef could not be found. Yosef was only 1½ years old but was very bright and spoke well for his age. Chanah and I went looking for him and noticed that he was encircled by a group of Russian soldiers. Yosef was entertaining them by singing "Katushka" and the soldiers were clapping their hands, laughing and saying 'bravo, bravo!' It was quite a sight!!

My maternal first cousin, Avraham Orlinski, an engineer, and his wife, Czeslova Orlinski MD, a pediatrician, who was not Jewish, were living in Warsaw as the war broke out. They rapidly moved east to his parent's town of Slonim, which was in the Russian occupied Poland, very near to us. Czeslova found work in the hospital in Slonim. They told us about the German occupation, and we also heard other reports from other travelers that were moving east from the German occupied Poland. During the Russian occupation some of our neighbors in Vatssevitsh moved out to other towns where they had relatives and other Jewish refugees arrived.

23 The Vapor, Bryna Bar Oni, 1976, p.25

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

In the first phase of the German invasion of Poland, refugees started flowing from West and Central Poland to the Russian occupied Poland. Most of the refugees were Jewish and estimated to be around 300,000. The border was officially closed in early November 1939.²⁴

The Soviet authorities began changing the capitalist economic system in the annex territories. The entire Jewish education system was disbanded and replaced by state schools. The only schools permitted to continue operating as state schools were those in which the Yiddish language was used in the curriculum that was compatible with that of the Soviet Union.²⁵

In Byten (near us) there was no organized Jewish life at the time of the Russian occupation. There were no communal committee or any other kind of Jewish representative authority. The over 800 Jewish residents of Byten who had been there before the war added 200 Jewish refugees from Poland, who had found a temporary home in Byten. All (religious activity) had been shut down and dismantled under Soviet rule.²⁶

24 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.44

25 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.47

26 Byten, Abramovitsh, p.321, 1954



Figure 36: Operation Barbarossa, USHMM.

CHAPTER IV

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF RUSSIAN OCCUPIED POLAND WWII: JUNE 1941 TO AUGUST 1942

Initial German Invasion: June 1941 (Operation Barbarossa)

On Friday, June (20), 1941, two days before the German occupation of Vatskevitch, it was a beautiful summer day and I noticed a very strange thing! The Russian pilots were wearing their dress uniforms in town, which was unusual. The next day, Saturday, it appeared to me that the Russian planes on the landing strip were having their fuel removed and getting prepared to be cleaned and painted. I thought they might be having a parade but that was also very strange! Later, I thought, did the Russians know the German Army would attack?

The Russian-German border was west of us on the Bug River. Our house was on the main “sheshe”, (street; Brest-Moscow Highway) of Vatskevitch. I clearly remember, my brother in law, Beryl Bassar, came to my house on Sunday morning (June 22, 1941) and said to me “Do you know, what is going on”, and “I said no!!” He said to me “look outside” and I did. From my kitchen window that overlooked the main street, I saw Russian soldiers and officers moving in every direction (chaos) on foot and by car. The Russian army initially mobilized all of the young civilian men including Yankel and my brother in law Chaim, but they soon returned in a few hours. I continued to see the Russian soldiers and officials move eastward on foot and by car. I saw the German planes overhead on the day of the invasion and later I saw German paratroopers at a distance. The German’s bombed and destroyed most of the Russian planes on the ground, some had no fuel? The few Russian planes that took off were shot down. The German soldiers occupied Vatskevitch the next day and I was told that many Russian soldiers were shot in the nearby fields. Some of the lucky Russian soldiers escaped to the nearby forests.

— TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY —

In Slonim (25 miles from Ivatsevichi) it was a sunny day, June 22, 1941, and the German planes were already overhead.²⁷ By the next day, 23rd June, German military units appeared at the junction of the Baranovitch-Bialystock-Slonim-Rozhany roads. The Germans entered Slonim on 24th. June ... everybody was terrified. On the 25th June, Stars of David had been painted on Jewish houses ... the work of so-called “good neighbors.”²⁸

In Byten (13 miles from Ivatsevichi) on Sunday, June 22, 1941, Molotov’s (Soviet foreign minister) speech on the radio met us like a terrible explosion. “The Germans have attacked us. They are bombing our cities and villages. At four o’clock in the afternoon they crossed the border.” That afternoon German airplanes appeared in the skies above Byten, and carefully observed the area and bombed aerodromes and the surrounding area. Automobiles, full of retreating Soviet troops from the front, traveled through the town in the direction of Baranowicze (East). A panicked mood ruled; nobody could find out any details [of what was happening] ... A cloud of a great storm crept up, especially for us Jews. Monday,

27 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.12

28 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.29-30

The panic grew. Tattered pieces of the Red Army arrived, who were retreating quickly eastward. German airplanes encircled the area and bombed different points. Jews were desperate.²⁹

In Byten, Wednesday, at two o'clock in the afternoon four armed Germans came from the road to the bridge. Gentiles from the side streets came out to welcome and receive the "guests." A shout from the Germans drove them back into their homes. After four (pm) a motorcycle carrying two Germans arrived. About five minutes later, we heard shooting from the direction of the monastery. Retreating Red Army soldiers ran into the Germans.³⁰

As the German Army invaded in June, 1941, there were about 100 (to 300) Jewish families in Vatsevitsh, which included many Jewish refugees. The German Army and their local collaborators, our neighbors, conducted searches to confiscate Jewish possessions including livestock, furniture, linens, blankets, housewares, sewing machines, horses, wagons, bicycles and other personal possessions. They took whatever they wanted.

Since we were living in Vatsevitsh during the German invasion my father and his friend, a farmer, came to Vatsevitsh from Lubishchitsy, 6-7 kilometers, by horse and wagon. They brought Schmuël (Samuel), who was a few months old, Yankel and I to my parent's home in Lubishchitsy. We only took some clothes with us and left our possessions. All of our new furniture, including a new bedroom set, kitchen table with chairs, a beautiful new light printed couch and chairs, clothing, dishes, utensils, bedding, pillows, and linens remained in Vatsevitsh.

In June 1941, when I was in my parent's home in Lubishchitsy the first German soldier I saw in the village drove up on a motorcycle and when I opened the door he looked huge, bigger than life, in his German uniform, which startled and frightened me and I turned pale. Soon many German soldiers stopped at my parent's home in Lubishchitsy because of the many shade trees in our large yard. One of my neighbors and former classmate from Lubishchitsy, who I knew very well, was evil! He helped the Germans identify Jewish homes, including my parent's home and my sister's home.

The Germans took over Liebas's house in Lubishchitsy. Lieba and her family, my brother Aron and his family, and the three of us all lived with our parents in their house in Lubishchitsy for the next few months. We had adequate food and life was much better then in Vatsevitsh. We had a white dog when the Germans arrived and I am not sure what ever happened to him. During the German occupation, we had no communication from Yankel's family in Zelva.

In July, 1941, I returned to my house in Vatsevitsh and noticed that my tenant, the veterinarian doctor and family, had moved out and a Polish girl was living in my house. I was sure the veterinarian moved into a larger Jewish house. This Polish girl who was living in my house wanted to keep my house, but I did not want her to occupy the house. Another local Polish family asked if they could occupy my house and I made the decision to give our house to the local Polish family. I took some of our clothing and left all of my new furniture and possessions. The Polish family told me I could still take vegetables from the garden, that I had previously planted. I returned to my parent's home and never returned to my house again!

While we were living with my parent's in 1941, during the German occupation, Gypsies passed by on horse and wagon asking for food. My parents would never deny anyone food and in exchange they offered to read fortune cards and our palms and tell us about the future. I did not believe in fortune cards or reading palms but I and some of our family members went along. Clearly what she predicted came true! She told me I would live a long life. She told my brother Aron; you are smart, and you will live a long life and you will come to a big city in a new land and will be wealthy. She told Aron's wife, Ethel, your family is dead, and you will not live a long time, which was correct.

29 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954, p.207

30 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954, p.207

Ivatsevichi and Byten Ghetto: June 1941 to August 1942

Establishing the Vatskevitch (Ivatsevichi) Ghetto: June 1941

Within a few weeks or so of the German occupation the Germans started to establish a Jewish ghetto in Vatskevitch. The German Army and local collaborators evicted the Jews and confiscated their homes with most of their possessions. They herded the Jews to the ghetto, a confined area where they were required to live with very few possessions, and it was severely overcrowded. The Vatskevitch ghetto was an “open ghetto,”³¹ not a “closed ghetto,” that is, there was no fence around it! My sister Chanah with Chaim Utschtein and their two sons remained in Vatskevitch so they were also evicted from their home and had to enter the Ivatsevichi ghetto. In the early days of the ghetto, my sister and family tried to maintain their lives. Chanah hired a Hebrew teacher, a refugee from Poland, in exchange for food, to teach their oldest son, Noeske, age 5, in the ghetto. Both of her sons had blondish white hair, blue eyes and were very bright. As the teacher instructed Noeske (Nossen), the younger son, Yosef (Yasef, Joseph), age 3, would eagerly and attentively listen. Not only would Noeske learn, but Yosef would also learn Hebrew. The teacher remarked to Chanah, in the 30 years she has taught, she never has seen two smarter boys, especially Yosef! The Vatskevitch “Shul” (synagogue) was already closed but early on some elderly Jews “davened” (prayed) in a very old abandoned house.

In the fall (about Sept 21, Rosh Hashanah) of 1941, all the Jews from the surrounding areas and villages of Vatskevitch were evicted from their homes and were herded into the Vatskevitch ghetto. This included my family, Lieba’s family, Aron’s family and my parents. At that time the open ghetto had “three locations” in Vatskevitch and was under strict supervision. The three ghetto locations had defined houses and buildings in each location. We were able to bring some possessions like clothing, pillows and blankets and even a few cows, so the children would have milk, but very soon the Germans took the cows away. Once I entered the ghetto in the early fall of 1941, I never returned to my house or my parent’s house until the war ended.

The German army, administration and their local collaborators were in total control and they removed all of the Jews’ rights and liberties. There were about 100 heavily armed Germans soldiers and armed police working for the Germans. The ghetto had strict regulations and a curfew. The Jews were not allowed to walk on the sidewalks, only in the street. To identify the Jews, they were forced to wear a yellow “lata” (patch) in the shape of a “yellow Star of David” on their upper back at all times. Beatings and harassments were a daily occurrence. If we did not follow the German orders, they would shoot us. Overall Jewish life as we know it, came to an end. The “Shul” (synagogue) building was part of the ghetto and Jewish refugees lived there. I did not know what the Germans did with the Sefer Torahs and religious books, but I assume they burned them.

We were moved into one location of the Vatskevitch ghetto. My parents, Abram and Razel: my oldest sister Lieba, and husband Beryl Baser and their three children, Baila, age 12, Isroel Itchick, age 8, and a son age 3; my brother Aron Zuchowicki, his wife Ethel and their two daughters, Lieba, age 1½, infant girl, a few month old; as well as Yankel and Schmu-el (Samuel) who was 5 months old and I were together in one room of a two-room old schoolhouse. In the second room of the school house were three Jewish families with other Jews and another three families lived in the hall including my future sister-in-law, Sara Polonski Zuchowicki, aunt. In the second location of the ghetto lived my sister Chanah and Chaim Utschtein and sons Yosef, age 3 and Noskie, age 6, with other Jews, including refugees from other towns. Each house or building within the ghetto was severely overcrowded with 10 to 15 families in each house. The small “shul” (synagogue) was in this location. In the third location of the ghetto, on a different street, lived (Ben-Zion) Kopeliansky, who was in charge (chairman) of the Judenrat (Jewish council). They lived in a small hotel that was owned by Jews and had very small rooms.

Each morning Kopeliansky (Judenrat) was given orders by the German’s and he then informed us of the German orders. The German orders included forced labor construction, improving and repairing the main “shisha” (road, highway) from Brest to Minsk to Moscow, which was very difficult work. Yankel and my brother-in-law Beryl and my father, who was about 68, were forced to work all day under guard, day after day, carrying stone and sand that repaired and covered potholes that the German trucks and equipment created during their advance. Jews also performed other

31 Sara Kopelianski Weis written communication and Sara Ross testimony

menial tasks including cleaning toilets. German abuse and beatings were a daily event and those that did not follow the orders were shot.

Although Kopeliansky was a very nice man, he had no “brearia” (choice), but to follow the Germans orders. He would tell us how much gold and silver the Germans wanted in return for promises of better conditions and food but that never occurred! In this way, we were encouraged to give up our remaining valuables and jewelry. I gave my wedding rings, gold watch, and tall silver Shabbos candle sticks, which were my sister’s wedding gift. My mother gave her gold ring and her beautiful large gold watch with a long gold chain necklace that wrapped around her neck three times. The necklace was her brother’s, Shimon Aharon Orlinski, wedding gift which she treasured. My parents also gave up a large copper samovar that we always used each day for tea.

Food was rationed to starvation levels. The Germans provided about 200gm (7 oz.) of bread per day. Many Jews would sell anything to the local population, including their clothing or other possessions, for just a piece of bread.³² Overall, our family was very fortunate because we had extra food. My brother Aron and my brother-in-law, Chaim, were blacksmith’s and were able to work in Chaim’s ‘kuzni’ (blacksmith shop) in Vatsevitsh for the German Army (war effort) because they were considered “nutzliche juden” (necessary Jews) repairing German equipment and trucks. The local population, mainly farmers, also needed work performed by blacksmiths.

In exchange, we were able to receive food, including milk, eggs, flour, bread and potatoes. Yankel did some work making hats, by hand, since his sewing machine was confiscated, and he also was paid with food. I did very little work because I took care of Samuel. After the Germans confiscated our two cows our children had minimal milk, which we received in exchange for work.

While in the ghetto my sister Chanah delivered a baby girl who was swollen (edematous) due to the conditions in the ghetto. My older sister, Lieba, miscarried late in her pregnancy while in the ghetto. Her breasts were full (engorged) and warm compresses were applied instead of cold compresses. She had severe pain and became so ill and confused that she was not aware of her surroundings. She could not take care of herself, including getting dressed. Chanah, my mother and I cared for Lieba and her children.

We were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks due to German orders and so we would take Lieba for walks in the street. When I walked alone, I would wear a large scarf to cover the yellow patch on my upper back in order not to be noticed as a Jew. Only locals who knew us would identify us as a Jew and they would say,” there is a Jew – there is a Jew” to the Germans!!

In the ghetto, I would often walk to the riverbank to wash Samuels diapers and I reflected on our situation, “the world is so beautiful but why are our lives, Jewish lives, so dark?”

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

*There were 600 Jews (about 100 families³³) in Iwacewicze (Vatsevitsh). They lived in a particular part of town (**no ghetto is not correct!**³⁴). The Jews worked in the sawmill there, the boss of which was the German Storzinger. This German also directed all of the other sawmills in the Baranowicze area. The whole time, Storzinger reassured “his” Jews (in Vatsevitsh) that nothing bad would happen to them. He regularly claimed that they were useful for the government and even when there were no more Jews anywhere, there would be Jews in Iwacewicze. The chairman of the “Judenrat” was Lipe (Ben Zion) Kopelianski (father of Sara Kopelianski Weis). The local Judenrat (Kopelianski) lavished this “good” German (Storzinger) with gifts from the best that the Jews of Iwacewicze had. He worked as a bookkeeper in the office of the sawmill and, thanks to that, became friendly with Storzinger. Every decree that befell*

32 Also in Kossov “...Jews would buy and trade their belongings, mostly for bread or flour” (in the ghetto). Memorial Book of Kosow Poleski (Belarus)-translated, p.6

33 Sara Ross testimony

34 Sara Ross testimony

the Jews of Iwacewicze, Lipe (Kopelianski) would have repealed – for a great price (gifts, jewelry, cash), of course.³⁵

During the occupation by the Nazi's (in Ivatsevichi) they committed atrocities. Germans robbed the village population of all their possessions, conducted illegal searches of people's homes, confiscating cattle, bread, clothing and other valuable possessions. They evicted Jewish homeowners from their homes into the streets and moved in themselves. The entire Jewish village population was stripped of their rights. The Germans built two jails and one gallows. The villagers were forced to watch the executions; those who did not want to watch were beaten with rubber batons. There were German officers and German police in the village. There was a curfew after 5 PM for all citizens. Each day the Germans murdered, hanged and tortured the Jewish citizens. In the jails, Germans tortured prisoners in the cruelest ways. Prisoners died from starvation, beatings, or committed suicide. German seized people on the street and checked their papers. Those who didn't have valid IDs were declared partisans (irregular military) and either killed on the spot or imprisoned. Often German centuries shot passerbys in the night if they thought they were partisans. The entire Jewish village was kicked out to the outskirts of the village and the area was called a ghetto ("open, not fenced in ghetto" as per Sara Ross' and Sara Kopelianski Weiss' testimony). Every day the Jews were forced to do the most difficult work. At work the Jews were beaten with rubber batons for no reasons. The only food Jews were given were 200g of bread each day. The Jews had to wear a yellow circle on their clothes, on their back and chest, and those that did not were beaten. I saw Germans marching Russian POWs out into the fields to be shot and they also shot POWs at the train station when they got off to get water.³⁶

The German army established a military administration in (Vatsevitsh and) the occupied territories of the Soviet Union that included the following – All male and female Jews 10 years or above in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union had to wear a 10-cm yellow, six-cornered, star on their left chest and on their back. Jewish property was to be confiscated and registered. A Jewish council (Judenrat), elected by the Jews, was established when there were more than 50 Jews in a settlement. The Jewish Council was required to carry out orders issued by the army or the police and the Jewish council was held personally responsible for any activities on part of the Jewish community directed against the German army or police. In rural areas, the Jews were moved and concentrated into towns or in sections of large towns where the population was predominantly Jewish. Ghettos were established or Jews were concentrated, incarcerated, within enclosed areas of the settlement to separate Jews from the rest of society. The Ghettos overcrowding, hunger and cold made life miserable. All Jews were registered and were forced to perform hard labor as slaves and were supplied by the Jewish council. To preserve the economic missions for the war Jewish industrial workers, artisans and domestic workers were allowed to continue their professions under the supervision of the civil administration. They were considered economically "useful" Jews so they were destined to be the last to be murdered. German authorities forced the Jewish Council's to collect large sums of money and valuables from the Jewish population. It was the job of the Jewish Council's to supervise the collection and transfer of money or it's equivalent value in gold or diamonds. Many Jews tried to believe that this so called "contribution" or levy would spare them further edicts.³⁷

The German authorities in the occupied Soviet territories aimed at the immediate confiscation of Jewish property, including any money, real estate and valuables in their position. The Jewish property provided a source for financing for the civil administration. Gold and silver objects were confiscated and cataloged and then send to the German administration as an immediate source of income. Looted collections of Jewish books, art and culture that spanned generations, beginning in the fifth teen century, were sent to

35 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954

36 Extraordinary State Commission to investigate and establish war crimes of the German Fascists Invaders; State Archives of Russia Federation – GARF – RG 22.002M, documented eyewitness reports, January, 1945 (Occupation of Germans in the Ivatsevichi Village, Kossovo Region, Brest Oblast) (Appendix)

37 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.96-97, 110-112-120

Germany. Even more books were sent to paper mills for recycling. Large quantities of Jewish property, including Jewish homes, were appropriated by members of the local population.³⁸

In Byten (13 miles from Ivatsevichi; were we had relatives and we stayed in 1942) a Judenrat (Jewish Council) was formed, which had to provide various things from the Jews for the military government, such as flour, linen, and clothing.³⁹ One day before Sukkot, (October 5) 1941⁴⁰ the Judenrat received an order that all Jews, ages thirteen and above, should replace the armbands (white) with two yellow patches. The yellow patches in the form of a Star of David should be attached to the left side of the chest and on the left shoulder in back. The patches had to be worn everywhere, constantly, wherever you were, whether at home or at work. Even at work it was forbidden to take off the clothing with the yellow patches, unless it was only to reattach [the patches] to the clothing worn in the street. People began looking for yellow material. Whoever had any, shared it with others. People appeared, with yellow Stars of David on their chests and backs. Until now, it was possible to make a mistake telling a Jew apart from a Belorussian policeman (Samochova), who wore an official armband, but now you could recognize a Jew from a hundred meters away.⁴¹

I would like to tell you about a few incidences, where not all of the German soldiers were bad!

- When we were in Lubishchitsy in 1941 before we were moved to the Vatsevitsh ghetto, I was near my father's, "kuznik" (kuzni, blacksmith) shop, under a large shade tree. German trucks would often stop at my parent's yard because of the large shade trees. One day four German soldiers came by on a very hot day, and I offered them "sour milk," which they enjoyed. The officer asked me, how far was it to Moscow. I did not know but I said it was about 1,000 km. The officer in German said, what a "Liceker Peltz," meaning literally a "lice infested fur" in German, indicating what a long distance and difficult road ahead for them to fight the Russians!
- Also, in Lubishchitsy in 1941, before we moved to the ghetto one German soldier in his forties brought me a cleaned goose to cook. I told him I did not know how to cook a goose, and he instructed me to put it into a hot oven, which I did. While the goose was cooking, he asked me, when did I learn German? I just told him I learned German in school, although I did not, but I knew Yiddish and could communicate with him. He told me he had a large farm and family in Germany and then showed me pictures of his family that he carried in his wallet. He proceeded to tell me that he was not interested in the war and he only wanted to go home and stated – "What can I do?"
- In 1942, a German soldier talked to my brother, Aron, while he was repairing his truck in the blacksmith shop in the Vatsevichi ghetto. He told my brother, "You, must escape! Run, run away! -the Germans will kill you". My brother responded and said, "Where can I go?" By then we knew our fate but where could we go with our young children and elderly parents? How can they survive (in the nearby forests)?
- Later, I will tell you what happened in the Vatsevitsh ghetto the night we escaped to the forest in August, 1942.

Ivatsevichi Ghetto Expulsion – "Yudenrhein:" March 14, 1942

In March (14) 1942, (two weeks) after Purim,⁴² the Germans decided to close the Vatsevitsh ghetto (Yudenrhein⁴³). It was a bitter cold winter day with a freezing snowstorm, extreme and dangerously low temperatures, well below freezing, with frost on the entire window and snow up to the knees.

38 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.399-401, 403, 417, 421

39 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954, p.207

40 The Jewish harvest festival, which began on October 6, 1941

41 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954, p.207

42 Jewish holiday, March 3, 1942

43 German -free of Jews, removal of Jews

Kopeliansky, (chairman of) the Judenrat, told us that all of the Vatsseitsh Jews had to be ready and line up in the side street the next morning at 9 AM. We thought something very bad was going to happen but what could we do. Were we going to be killed? We had no emotion at that time, we did not cry, we were just there. We took what we could carry for our children, which was very little, and we dressed for winter as best as possible. All of the able-bodied Jews, about 600, including Jewish refugees were lined up in many rows and we had to stand holding our children. The German soldiers and police showed up with rifles and whips (batons) on both sides of the street. They then took away most of what we were carrying, even a piece of bread, for our children. My father was wearing two coats, one long and one short sheep skin fur over the longer coat. The German soldiers noticed his two coats and stripped both coats off of him and beat him with a baton. He was then only wearing a shirt with no protection from the severe brutal frost so my brother, Aron, took off his coat and gave it to my father. The local policemen working for the Germans shot any Jew that could not line up. One sick young Jewish boy and patients in the hospital were shot in their beds. My future sister-in-law, Sara Polonski's, aunt who was also very ill was also shot by her neighbor who worked for the Germans!

We stayed lined up in the street for many hours during that bitter cold day and eventually the Germans organized sleds from the nearby farms to move the older Jews and children to a designated area 20 Km. within the forest. Because there were not enough sleds some younger Jews with their children had to walk during this unbearable cold day, through the deep snow, to the German designated area.

Because he had no choice one of our Russian neighbors and friend from Lubishchitsy worked for the Germans. He tried to help us, and he even warned us about the German plans ahead of time! He gave Yankel, my brother Aron, and brother-in-law Beryl, a "Scheinen" (lebenscheinen, "permit"), that considered them "nutzliche Juden" (necessary Jews). They were allowed to stay behind in Vatsseitsh. Their job was to clean out the Jewish ghetto houses, including burying Jews who were shot by the German police. Chairman of the Judenrat, (Lipe) Kopelanski also remained in town.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

After the arrival of the expulsion announcement, Lipe (Kopelianski, chairman of the Judenrat) turned to (the German) Storzinger for help. The latter again reassured him that they should remain calm and that he would intervene and nothing bad would happen to the Jews (which was not correct, and the expulsion occurred).⁴⁴

Slonim documentation stated. -In the first days of March 1942, German officials, Regional Kommissar Gerhardt Errens and deputy Gunther Stelle who had jurisdiction in Slonim informed the Jewish Council of Ivatsevichi (Vatseitsh) (or by a letter delivered by Byten Judenrat from Kvint in Slonim to the Ivatsevichi Judenrat), that all the Jews had to leave their homes-"yudenrhein"- by March 15. Stelle chose the morning of March 14, 1942 in a freezing (about 30 below freezing⁴⁵) snowstorm, for the expulsion.⁴⁶

The local German administration issued certificates, "Scheinen," for work. The Schein provided a life insurance, at least temporarily, to avoid immediate murder actions.⁴⁷

Another Lubishchitsy neighbor and friend was a farmer who worked for my father. He took our family that included, my parents, two sisters, sister-in-law, myself, our children, and two of our neighbors on his sled to the forest. Our entire family went with him except my brother-in-law, Chaim Utschtein. Again, we thought we were going to be killed but we had no emotion at that time! "We were calm, we did not cry, we did not laugh, we were just there!" We did not want to think about what was going to happen.

I wrapped Schmucl in my coat, and we sat like chickens pushed together on the sled. This farmer and good friend took a significant risk for himself and his family! Instead of taking us to the German designated area in the forest on this freezing, bitter cold day he brought us to his farmhouse at the edge of the forest where he gave us milk and bread

44 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954

45 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.158

46 Nachum Albert, The Destruction of Slonim Jewery, 1989, p.119

47 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.456

and we rested a few hours in his warm house. He then took us to the location that was specified by the Germans, which was about 20 km. into the forest. It was already getting dark and approaching nightfall and no one was in the forest location. My father asked him to take us a little further to a farm of another previous neighbor and friend, Mr. Michoelkovitch. He was not home but his wife recognized us and welcomed us. It was night and we peeled potatoes; she cooked them and gave us milk, potatoes and bread. We brought in straw to sleep on the very cold floor, but the house was warm. Mr. Michoelovitch arrived at his home later that evening from Slonim and told my father, Abramko, we are good friends but “I am afraid for myself and my family!” You must go to the designated German location at dawn. At dawn the next day, Mr. Michoelkovitch gave us some bread and milk and took us by sled to the German designated area in the forest.

When we arrived at the designated area in the morning, we saw no one and we walked and approached a small hunting cabin, where locals were playing cards. They let us in their warm cabin and told us that the Germans might be coming to kill animals in the forest, but we did not pay attention because we thought we were going to be killed anyway. Late that afternoon the sun was setting but it was still bright outside because of the reflecting snow. I decided to take a short walk holding Schmuel. In the distance, I heard the bells clanging from a horse-drawn sled, as it approached me. I was not sure who it might be but most likely they would be Germans. At that point, I did not care, what is the difference, if I am killed now or later? As the sled approached, I saw Mr. Kopeliansky and a German soldier. Kopeliansky told me, which I passed on to my parents, that the Germans have new orders. We were told we were now allowed to leave the forest and go anywhere we wished, Byten, Kossov, or Slonim, but we could not return to Vatsevitsh. We were later told that Lithuanian soldiers, who work for the Germans, were going to kill us but they did not show up that day due to the harsh bitter winter conditions of snow and frost and fortunately our lives were spared. The Germans would often give orders to kill Jews, only during designated times and places! When the time would pass then the Germans would wait for their next order to kill Jews. As I was telling my parents about the new order, one of the local Russians, a former Russian soldier, in this small forest hunting cabin immediately and without reservation offered to help us! At my father’s request that evening, he took us to Byten by horse drawn sled, which was about an hour away. It was the closest town to us where we had relatives. Imagine, on the sled how we were sitting again, like geese pushed together holding our children, maybe 20 of us. May G-d bless this Russian for his kindness helping our children and us during that bitter cold night! He did not ask us for anything, but Ethel gave him her watch, not a gold watch, as a token of appreciation and we kissed him for his kindness.

My brother-in-law, Chaim Utschein, was separated from us in a different line in Vatsevitsh and we did not know where he was. He later told us there were not enough sleds and he walked with other young Jews deep into the forest for approximately 20km. He helped a young lady, his neighbor, carry her three or four children. That day, due to the extreme temperature this lady and Chaim developed severe frostbite. Chaim’s frostbite effected his right hand and in time he was taken to a hospital in Kossov. The extreme frigid temperature caused many Jews to develop frostbite and other Jews including an elderly Jewish neighbor and young children died.

Byten Ghetto: March 1942 to Spring 1942

We arrived in Byten⁴⁸ (13 miles from Vatsevitsh) at night at my paternal first cousin’s, Zelig (Zelyk) Zuchowicki, home. The house was very large house and was attached to his shoemaking shop, on the edge of town, outside of the Byten ghetto. Zelig made and repaired shoes for the Germans and was considered a “necessary Jew”, so he was allowed to live outside of the ghetto. Zelig lived in the rear part of the house and had a bedroom in the front. When we arrived, Zelig’s wife, Vikhne, had already taken in two young displaced Jews from Vatsevitsh that were asleep in the only remaining bed. They did not know that we were coming, and we could not take away the bed from the other Jews. That night Vikhne cooked some unpeeled potatoes for us. The house had a large main room and was so, so cold because they had no wood to keep it warm. It was even colder than the forest. We slept in our clothes on the floor without any straw. I will never forget how cold I was that night as I held Samuel wrapped in my coat on the unbearable cold floor. In the morning the other Jews that were taken in by my cousin returned to the Judenrat in the Byten ghetto.

48 Byten had 880 Jews plus 200 Jewish refugees from Poland when the WWII broke out (USHMM Ghettos and Camps).



Figure 37: ? Simkha (Simcha) and Etl Zuchowicki, Zeligs children in 1939, picture from Deborah Friedman (Zuchowicki/Zax family).

Zelig's children, Simcha, his son, and Etl, his daughter also lived in Byten. Zeligs sister Chana had many children and also lived in Byten. Zelig had two uncles, cousins and nephew⁴⁹ in America. My paternal uncle, my father's brother, Schlazer (Ischlazer, Leyzer) Zhukhovitski (Zuchowicki), was in his 70's and his wife Alta lived in Byten. He was a blacksmith and very "frum"(orthodox). Schlazer's children also lived in Byten, Noske Zuchowicki, a blacksmith, and his daughter in law, Tsherne or Cheane and their three children (?Riva, Paika and Sarah). Schlazer's daughter, Rochal Lieba, was married to a good tailor and was in the process of building a larger shop before the war in Byten and they had three children. (See Zuchowicki family tree in appendix)

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

Friday evening, a few of the expelled Jews of Iwacewicze, who had gotten a sleigh in the village of Zalesia, arrived in Byten. They fell into the first cottages of the town half-dead, with frostbitten hands, feet, and faces. As soon as the tragedy of Iwaciwicze became known in the town, the entire Jewish population was roused to action. The Judenrat immediately divided up the job of helping [the Jews of Iwacewicze]. They quickly hired wagons and sent them down the road to gather the victims [of the expulsion]. They also organized a receiving point to give first aid to the victims. (The Hassidic synagogue served as the "emergency room.")

Over the course of the Sabbath, those who had the strength continued to arrive on foot and the sick and the stragglers arrived on wagons. There was not a single Jew in Byten who did not take part in the operation. Dr. Vodnik (Wodnik), a refugee from Łódź, along with a large staff, bandaged their wounds. To that end, a large amount of grease (vaseline and animal fat) had to be gathered. Another group was organized to make tea and food for the victims to warm them up, others led them to various houses, and a third group took upon itself to collect food. That day, 400 refugees from Iwacewicze arrived in Byten. Among them were some who were severely frostbitten and had to be tended to, fed, carried about, and so forth. About a third of them were moderately frostbitten, the rest, only mildly. There was virtually no one who was not hurt by the frost. On the road, some were found frostbitten to death. A group of the severely frostbitten was sent from Byten to a Jewish hospital in Słonim, where a few of them died from their injuries.

49 Sam Zax, Zelig's (Zelyk) nephew. Yad Vashem page of testimony 2/4/1983. Quincy, Mass.

The 400 Jews of Iwacewicze (Vatsevitsh) were immediately incorporated into our family. People shared the last of their belongings with them – clothes, beds, food, and medicine. Let this be recorded to the eternal merit of the congregation of Byten. The Judenrat sent messengers to Slonim to alert them concerning aid, medicine, and food for the suffering. The Judenrat in Slonim collected two wagonloads of various items and sent them to Byten. To this end, a great sum of money was collected by the Slonim tanners [?] under the direction of Yosef Payevski and Yosef Yezhernitski.⁵⁰

During the expulsion 21 Jews froze to death.⁵¹

We stayed in Byten until the spring of 1942 with my cousin Zelig. My sister Chanah and her two sons and baby girl stayed with a friend of hers in Byten because they had adequate firewood to keep their house warm. While in Byten, like the other Jews, we would go to the Judenrat office and were given one piece of bread a day (200gm) and black coffee. Yankel, my brother Aron, and my brother-in-law Beryl were still in Vatsevitsh because they were considered “nutzliche Juden” (necessary Jews). My brother was able to work in the blacksmith shop for the Germans and local farmers in exchange for food and supplies. Our former Russian neighbor from Lubishchitsy worked for the Germans. He willingly agreed to help us and was paid by Aron and Yankel for his efforts. At a significant risk to himself, he provided us a great service. He brought us food, which we desperately needed, like bread, milk and eggs hidden under potatoes and firewood from Vatsevitsh to Byten! Even though our situation was very bad in Byten, because we had limited firewood and food, the other Jews in the Byten ghetto were much worse off.

Vatsevitsh (Ivatsevichi) Ghetto: Spring 1942 to August 6, 1942

In the spring of 1942, the Germans allowed mostly young Jews in Byten to return to Vatsevitsh to work in the sawmill, cutting boards from timbers. During that time my sister, Chanah, my sister-in-law, Ethel, and I with our children and niece Baila, age 12, who was beautiful with curly hair, returned to Vatsevitsh. We were reunited with Yankel, Aron and Beryl. My brother Aron continued to work in Chaim’s blacksmith shop, and Yankel continued to make some hats by hand in exchange for food. My mother, Lieba, who was ill, and her two younger boys were not allowed to return to Vatsevitsh.

— TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY —

In the spring, to July, 1942, about 200 Jews from Ivatsevichi (Vatsevichi) that were staying in Byten were allowed to return to Ivatsevichi due to Kopelianski (Judenrat) efforts.⁵²

During this time Chaim returned from the hospital in ?Kossov to Vatsevitsh. The frostbite caused severe damage to his right hand with loss of skin and muscle tissue leaving only his “exposed right-hand bones just hanging.” He had no function of his right hand and could not work which was devastating physically and emotionally, not only for him but also for my sister Chanah.

My mother and Lieba and her two younger boys stayed in Byten with my cousin, Zelig Zuchowicki, in his home with other Jewish refugees. My mother took care of Lieba, who was totally confused, and her two children. My mother was overwhelmed with the situation and did not want to go on! She told me, “I do not want to suffer anymore, I suffered enough during World War I.”

My father would walk many hours, back and forth, between Byten, Vatsevitsh, and Lubishchitsy. Byten is 20 to 24km (13 miles) to Lubishchitsy. In Lubishchitsy our former neighbors and friends gave my father butter, milk, eggs, bread and whatever help they could provide. We continued to send firewood, potatoes, eggs and other food by way of our Russian neighbor to Byten for my mother, Lieba and her two children. My father and Beryl would also bring food for my mother, Lieba and the two boys.

⁵⁰ Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954

⁵¹ Albert, Slonim; Also-The Vapor, Bryna Bar Oni, 1976, p.41

⁵² Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954, p.207

After Tisha B'Av (9 Av, July 23) 1942, Beryl was carrying food from Vatsvitsh to Byten. Along the way he was stopped and held in a basement for a few hours by Germans then released. He was told that all of the Jews in Byten were killed, including my mother, my sister Lieba and her two younger children! Later we were also told the Jews in Byten were slaughtered at a prepared trench. Beryl returned to Vatsvitsh and told us what he had learned. His daughter, Baila, age 12, was on her bed and began to cry hysterically!! Another young girl in the room with us tried to kill herself by drinking a bottle of "esig" (vinegar), because her mother was in Byten. This young girl fortunately survived the war.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

The brief era of the Byten fenced ghetto lasted from Shavuot until Shabbat Nahamu (May 22-July 24, 1942).⁵³ In the space of a few weeks, until Shabbat Nahamu (11 Av) 1942, July 25, 1942 the murderers slowly paralyzed the 1,200 Jews, over 800 residents and 200 Jewish refugees, of Byten physically and spiritually. Of the 1,200 only 73 survived. Meanwhile, seeking a way to escape, seventy Jews in the town presented themselves as so-called "useful Jews" and concerned themselves with [obtaining] lebenscheinen. Just as in other places where massacres took place, certain expert craftsmen and also non-craftsmen received – in exchange for large sums [of money] – special papers as "useful Jews" who were important for the (German) government. They lived outside of the ghetto, in their own homes, and worked for the gendarmes and other government officials. Very few were fortunate enough to become so privileged. Outside of the ghetto they felt, so to speak, safer than in the ghetto, thinking that they had already succeeded in remaining alive. Among them there were even some who did not want to have any dealing with the ghetto at all, believing that the more they estranged themselves from the ghetto, the greater the chance they had of saving themselves. But it was no more than a delusion.⁵⁴

The Germans dug an open pit (other account two pits⁵⁵), forty by seven meters outside of town, between the village of Zapolye and Rudnye in preparation to liquidate the ghetto. The German gendarmes and Belorussian police drove the Jews by car and stripped the Jews naked at the edge of the pit and shot them with machine guns, and others were crushed to death as the bodies fell on them. The first massacres, slaughter, occurred on July 25, 1942, 11 AV, 840 Jews were killed and 340 Jews survived. The second slaughter was on August 29, 1942 and the third slaughter was on Sept 19, 1943. The German's and police took the Jewish clothing that after the first slaughter. The first victims were the so-called privileged Jews who lived outside of the ghetto. (My uncle) Ischlazer (Leyzer) Zhukhovitski (Zuchowicki), survived the first slaughter, also a necessary Jew (blacksmith), obtained a lebenscheinen, shaved off his beard completely to look younger. He was later shot while he was working in a blacksmith shop in Byten.⁵⁶ His wife (Alta) and their son, Noeske Zuchowicki (my cousin) and daughter, Rochal Lieba (my cousin who married a tailor) and her three children were also killed. Zelick (Zelig) Zhukovitski (Zuchowicki), (my cousin) was a necessary Jew. He repaired and made shoes and lived in his house outside of the fenced ghetto and was killed during the third slaughter in Byten with his son Simkhe.⁵⁷

After the first massacre, over 200 Jews from Byten left for the Volcha (Volche) Nory forest, including the Ivatsevichi Rabbi Rakhman and Schmucl Slonimiski. There was no other way out except to the forest and partisans. They traveled east towards the Szczara River then to the Olieszenik, towards the village of Kochanowe to the Volcha Nory forest. There they meet a group of Jewish and non-Jewish partisans. Some joined Unit 51. The Jewish partisans were from Ivatsevichi, Byten, Kossow Polski and Slonim. There were still 140 Jews left in the town after the first massacre. All the Jews, about 900, were killed in the open pit even after the first massacre except those that escaped to the forest.⁵⁸

53 The Sabbath after Tisha b'Av. The fenced ghetto lasted from May 22 until July 24, 1942.

54 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954 4

55 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.159

56 Sara Ross documentation

57 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954

58 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954

Pinkas Bitan (Byten) and the Shoah list of Victims from Yad Vashem for Byten has other Zuchovitzki's (Zuchowicki) names (most likely our relatives).⁵⁹ The Russian Extraordinary Commission (GARF) after the war identified the following Germans responsible as chief organizers: Chief of gerdarmerie Schultz, officers, Ganoftol, Khilkin, Brovzer, Grikhe, Verber, Enkel, Shmek, Izberg, etc in Byten.⁶⁰

A letter found in Byten, written by Zlata Vishnyatsky with daughter Junita (age 10) to her husband – father before her death on July 31, 1942 (Byten, now in Belarus).

Dear Moshkele and all my dear people.

On July 25 (1942) a terrible massacre occurred. It was a mass murder. Only 350 (Jewish) people are left. 850 died a black death at the hands of the murderers. They were thrown like puppies into latrines. Living children were thrown into pits. We have survived for the time being ... Every day we wait for death and morn our near ones ... But I envy them ... it is impossible to tell of our torments ... The only thing that you can do for us is take revenge on our murderers ... Avenge! I kiss you fervently and bid your farewell before we die.

Dear Father,

I say good-bye to you before dying. We very much want to live, but all is lost – they won't let us! I am so afraid of this death, because the small children are thrown alive into the graves. Goodbye forever. I kiss you over and over...⁶¹

Alfred Metzner, a German interpreter, in Slonim that housed 10,000-12,000 Jews ... participated in Slonim and other massacres stated. – The guards who led the Jews to the murder sites consisted of local police ... The murder unit was comprised of Latvian volunteers and SS personnel (Einsatzgruppe⁶² B). They were given alcohol and cigarettes to ensure that they do their jobs properly. Many of the Jews were only wounded, because the members of the murder unit were too drunk. The Jews dragged themselves, naked and bleeding all over ... and were shot by the local police ... There was a meeting with Gebietskommissar Gert Erren that evening ... we drank and celebrated. Actions were carried out in other places ... in Byten, 3,000-4,000 Jews ... Soldiers and railway workers from the Slonim station volunteered, since they could earn something from participating in the executions. Clothing and valuables were removed.⁶³

I saw Vikhne Zuchowicki, Zelig's wife, and her daughter, Etl, in late summer 1942 in the Volche Nory Forest (Wolf Caves). She told me they escaped from Byten after they saw the Germans surrounding their house after the (last) German slaughter in Byten. She was sure that the Germans arrived to kill Zelig and family. Vikhne also told me that my mother, Razel Zuchowicki, my oldest sister, Lieba Bassar, and her two sons, Isroel Itchie, age 6 and son, age 3, who were hiding in Zelig's house attic were also killed during the slaughters in 1942. They most likely were buried in the common trench in Byten. Zelig was one of the last to be killed by the Germans in Byten because he was a necessary Jew⁶⁴. After the summer of 1942 I never saw Vikhne and Eyl Zuchowicki again, I assume they died in the fores.⁶⁵

59 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein, 1954

60 The Russian Extraordinary Commission (GARF); Byten.

61 The Black Book, edited by Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, 1946, English translation, 1981

62 Paramilitary mobile death squads

63 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.254-255

64 Vikhne Zuchowicki documentation.

65 Memorial Book Byten – Died on September 30, or February 19, 1943 in the forest



Figure 38: *Byten memorial at site of Jewish slaughter at the trench in 1942, 2008*



Figure 39: *Byten memorial site of Jewish slaughter at the trench in 1942, 6/2018*



Figure 40: *Byten memorial site of Jewish slaughter at the trench in 1942, 6/2018*

First summer 1971
11
10
10
11
Third summer 1972
11
10 left 1972
11

DIE LETSTEE ADEIS: SARA ZUCHOWICKI ROSJANSKI | 45

38	Косе	Тиме	1926	М.	28
39	"	Завел	1928	М.	
40	Питковская	Лейла	1906	М.	погиб в лесу
41	Питковская	Ораи	1908	М.	погиб в лесу
42	Питковская	Тейд	1932	М.	погиб в лесу
43	Юрковский	Молча	1900	М.	погиб в лесу
44	"	Сара	1906	М.	погиб в лесу
45	"	Роза	1928	М.	погиб в лесу
46	"	Тайд	1930	М.	погиб в лесу
47	"	Б-ейд	1932	М.	погиб в лесу
48	Мухомовский	Абрам	1895	М.	
49	"	Викне	1910	М.	погиб в лесу
50	"	Симха	1928	М.	погиб в лесу
51	"	Этиа	1930	М.	
52	Марксон	Абрам	1885	М.	
53	Марксон	Ораи	1895	М.	
54	"	Мотик	1920	М.	
55	Фридман	Молча	1880	М.	
56	"	Сара	1890	М.	
57	"	Этиа	1916	М.	
58	Минкович	Мейер	1900	М.	
59	"	Фрида	1904	М.	
60	"	Рахит	1928	М.	
61	"	Абрам	1930	М.	
62	Золоткин	Саломе	1865	М.	
63	"	Давид	1897	М.	
64	"	Тиме	1905	М.	
65	"	Зейна	1930	М.	
66	"	Хай	1932	М.	
67	Косе	Уаси	1900	М.	
68	"	Хай	1912	М.	
69	"	Зейна	1939	М.	
70	"	Руба	1930	М.	
71	Калек	Ахел	1900	М.	

Figure 42: Zuchowicki family victims in Byten, #548 Abram Zuchowicki, #549 Vikhne Zuchowicki, #550 Simkha Zuchowicki, #551 Ethya(Etl) Zuchowicki, – Avraham Zuhovitzki (Zuchowicki) (Sara Rosjanski's father – should be Ivatsevichi) died 1942 – records of the Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascists Crimes, GARF Archives; Byten, 1941-42, Russian document, Yad Vashem

928	Айнуштейн	Цола	1895	М	35
929	"	Турин	1938	М	
930	"	Лей	1932	М	
931	Калуский		1870	М	
932	Калуский		1900	М	
933	Калуский		1910	М	
934	Калуский		1926	М	
935	Шутан		1905	М	
936	Шутан		1907	М	
937	Шутан		1909	М	
938	Шутан		1912	М	
939	Вайнштейн		1870	М	
940	Вайнштейн		1872	М	
941	Вайнштейн		1918	М	
942	Вайнштейн	Цола	1916	М	номера 1-100
943	Свишневский	Алба	1936	М	
944	Левинчук	Алба	1902	М	
945	"	Алба	1902	М	
946	"	Сара	1926	М	
947	Истича		1900	М	
948	Михайловский	Алба	1870	М	
949	Бейзер	Алба	1900	М	
950	Бейзер		1928	М	
951	Бейзер		1930	М	
952	Бейзер		1932	М	
953	Крабчик	Алба	1900	М	
954	"	Алба	1902	М	
955	"	Алба	1935	М	
956	"	Алба	1937	М	

Figure 43: Zuchowicki victim list in Byten, #948 – Alta Zuchowicki, Records of the Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascists Crimes, GARF Archives; Byten, 1941-42, Russian document, Yad Vashem

Forever remember and forever sanctify the truncated lives of your parents, brothers and sisters.

Forever remember and forever seek to revenge their murders.

**List of the Byten martyrs and pure souls,
who were killed by the Germans and their collaborators in the three mass
slaughters**

First slaughter – Shabes <i>Nakhmu</i> ^[1]	25 th of July	1942
Second slaughter – Saturday	29 th of August	1942
Third slaughter	19 th of September	1943

And later at various times in the forests, fields, and other places:

ZHUKHOVITSKI	Leyzer	(the smith from Posterin [?])	First slaughter
ZHUKHOVITSKI	?	his wife	First slaughter
ZHUKHOVITSKI	Noske	their son	First slaughter
ZHUKHOVITSKI	Tsherne	his wife (Moyshe-Ayzik's daughter)	First slaughter
ZHUKHOVITSKI		three of their children	First slaughter
ZHUKHOVITSKI	Zelig	(the shoemaker)	Third slaughter
ZHUKHOVITSKI	Simkhe	his son	Third slaughter
ZHUKHOVITSKI	Vikhne	Zelig's wife	September 30, 1942
ZHUKHOVITSKI	Etl	their daughter	September 30, 1942

Figure 44: *Zuchowicki family – translated Memorial Book of Byten. Leyzer (Schlazer) Zuchowicki was my paternal uncle. He was a “shmid” (smith, blacksmith) and originally lived in the village of Pasterine (Podstariny) near Byten. Vikhne and Etl were killed in the Volche Nory forest in 1942.*

Ivatsevichi Ghetto Massacre/Slaughter: August 6, 1942; 23 AV, 5702

From the spring of 1942 to August 6, 1942, 23 AV, the Vatsseitsh ghetto was “not” gated and the Jews were confined to two locations. One location was near the rail tracks where Kopelianski lived. We stayed in the other location in a small hotel that was previously owned by Jews.⁶⁶ Yankel, Shmuel (Samuel), my father and I stayed in one small room that had one window in the front. Across the hall were Aron and Ethel and their two girls, the oldest was Lieba, 1½, and the baby was a few months old. With them was Chanah, Chaim and their sons, Noeske, 6, Yosef, 3, and their baby girl. Beryl and his oldest daughter Baila, 12, stayed in the kitchen, which was in the rear of the hotel.

⁶⁶ Sara Kopeliansky Weis communication to Abraham Ross—her mother’s sister, Fejga Basensohn, owned the hotel.



Figure 45: *The Jewish hotel in the area of the Ivatsevichi Ghetto, currently a museum 6/2018, (Melissa and Phyllis Babich, Nancy, Abe, David, Aron, Debra, Josh Ross (L-R))*

We knew the Germans were killing Jews in the surrounding towns, Byten, Kossov and Slonim as well as other towns. We got word that the Jews in Kossov were slaughtered on or about July 25th (11 Av) 1942.⁶⁷ The Jews in the Slonim ghetto had many slaughters during this time period. We also knew that some Jews escaped from the ghettos to the forests. There were many stories about the well-armed and powerful partisans in the dense and extensive Volche (Wolcze, Volch'i) Nory Forest⁶⁸ fighting Germans and the Germans had patrols looking for Partisans.



Figure 46: *Kossov memorial at the site of Jewish slaughter at the trench in 1942, 2008*

67 The first and main slaughter of the Kossov Jews was on Saturday the eleventh of Av, 5702 (July 25, 1942) – Memorial Book of Kosow Poleski (Belarus), p.8 (translated copy)

68 Forests of Volche (Wolcze, Volch'i) Nory (wolf caves) – see index for location



Figure 47: New Kosovo memorial; Phyllis Zuchowicki Babich and Melissa Babich, 6/2018

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

About 400 Jews from Slonim managed to escape to the (Volce Nory) forest, and many joined Schorers Company 51.⁶⁹ This included my cousins Avraham and Dr. Cheslova Orlinski from Slonim, an important physician for the partisans (Schorers 51).

The Slonim Jewish underground-smuggled firearms (including machine guns, rifles, grenades) and ammunition from the German loot camp to the ghetto then to the partisans in the forest, which was a complex and dangerous operation.⁷⁰ Five of the Slonim Jewish underground members reached the forest (Volchye Nori) in June 1942 with guides. Dr. Avaham Blumovitch brought a heavy crate of medical

69 Slonim ghetto, USHMM document

70 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.62

instruments, materials and medicines.⁷¹ Dr. Cheslava (Orlinski, my cousins wife) and Dr. Kaplinski worked in the municipal Hospital in Slonim and continued to pass medical equipment and medicines to the partisans.⁷² Later, Dr. Orlinski and her husband, Avraham Orlinski (my maternal first cousin) escaped to the forest and served with the partisans (Shchors group 51).⁷³

Rivka (? Kosofsky) was my future sister-in-law, Sara Polanski's, cousin and one of my closest girlfriends, like a sister to me. She was very strong and knew her way to the forest and made plans to escape. She lived in an abandoned train car near the rail tracks, in the area where Mr. Kopelianski lived. She constructed a tunnel, underneath the train car and garden, as an escape route to the forest. When the time came, she asked me with Schmuël to stay with her at night so we could escape together. We did not know when the Germans would come to kill us, but it was clear it was just a matter of time. When the Germans came for us on the night of August 5 or 6, 1942, Rivka did escape. An eyewitness later told me that one of the Vatsevitsh policeman saw her the morning after she escaped walking across an open field. The policeman saw her, and she actively fought him twisting his arm, which she broke. With his other hand, the policeman shot her. I am not sure why she traveled during daylight in an open field.

Bashka Kosofsky was also my future sister-in-law, Sara Polonski's, cousin and a very good friend of mine. She had a Russian boyfriend, Nickoli (Nickoliovitch), who became a partisan. The Russian boyfriend placed Bashka on a farm outside of Kossov in 1942 for protection. Bashka worked for the farmer but Nickoli also threatened the farmer, that if anything happens to Bashka, he would burn down his house. Bashka stayed on the farm for 1½ year's, from 1942 until late 1943, and then joined Nickoli in the forest when the conditions improved.

We knew that it was a matter of time that the Germans would kill us!! We were told that the Germans had dug trenches, as graves, outside of Vatssevitsh in preparation to kill us!!

Imagine, we had so many conflicting thoughts! We thought if some of us could escape, would the Germans and their sympathizers kill the rest of our family? Could we survive in hiding places in and around the ghetto. Could we survive with the partisans in the brutal forest conditions with our young children and elderly Father? Those last days and weeks, end of July and beginning of August, 1942 became so difficult.

I spoke to my sister, Chanah about escaping from the ghetto. She saw no hope, only despair- her two young sons, Noeske, Yosef, newborn girl and her disabled husband, Chaim. She told me in no uncertain terms "No!! I just want to go, I will not do anything!" but she made a "hiding place" under the floor below the stove in the ghetto for her and her family. My father always tried to survive and talked about the partisans and possibly escaping south to the Pinsk forests and "blottes" (swamps). My father was very "frum"(religious) who believed in G-d, "davened" (prayed) each day, kept kosher and the Sabbath, and was so well respected as a good person and helped anyone in need. When he saw despair and no hope in our situation, I will never forget his words – "there is nothing left in this world, eat and drink, whatever you want!!"

I clearly remember the night of August 5 or after midnight, August 6, 1942 (23 AV, 5702), about six weeks before Rosh Hashanah. We were asleep in the small front room of the ghetto-hotel and awoke to armed German soldiers shouting "halt, halt, halt!!!" and the loud noises of clanging pots and pans as they entered the hotel through the kitchen, which was in the rear of the hotel. Beryl and his daughter Baila were sleeping in one bed in the kitchen. My husband, Yankel, was certain that the Germans had come to kill us; that the end had come! That night we just reacted! Yankel, in his long underwear opened the window and jumped through it. I was wearing a nightgown, and wrapped Schmuël (Samuel), age 16 mo., in my old robe and followed Yankel through the window. I didn't even take my good coat that was hanging on a hook next to the bed. At that moment, it was very chaotic, tumultuous and I did not know what else was happening within the hotel and we just reacted. My father was in the same room with us and he also jumped through the same window but ran in a different direction from us. That was the last time I saw him. He had significant hearing loss and I tried to get my father's attention, but I did not shout because the Germans were everywhere and most likely my father was not able to hear me. I followed Yankel across the Main Street to hide. I believe my father headed

71 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.71

72 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.84

73 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.102, 104

towards the Pinsk's forests and marshes and partisans. At that time, I did not know who else escaped, if anyone. Once we escaped through the window we crossed into a large cornfield and we sat. I asked Yankel, "maybe this is nothing" because the Germans would often come around screaming and Yankel responded "No! We will not go back, and we are the last and must escape!" An eyewitness told me after the war that my father was identified by a local field hand in a pasture and was shot.

Chanah and Chaim and children had no intention of escaping from the ghetto but had a hiding place under the ghetto floor. I believe my sister-in-law, Ethel, and the two young girls escaped and were later killed. I have often asked myself, were the armed German soldiers drunk or did they really want to help us by screaming "halt, halt, halt" and clanging the pots and pans? Most likely these Germans were drunk! In the other ghetto location near the rail tracks and Mr. Kopelianki, the German soldiers surrounded the ghetto area, and nobody escaped!

Two days later, when I saw my brother, Aron, and my brother-in-law, Beryl, in the Volche Nory forest (Wolf Caves) they told me what happened. Beryl and his daughter, Baila, age 12, were sleeping in the kitchen, and Beryl ran out the rear door going by the German soldiers as they entered. His daughter, Baila, remained in the hotel!! I will never understand why he did he not take Baila, "it was a terrible thing!!" I have always reflected that she could have survived in the forest. My brother, Aron, also ran by the armed German soldiers through the rear of the hotel and hid within a pile of boards near the hotel then in a dense vegetable garden within tall-staked green bean plants. In the morning of August 6, 1942, 23 Av, he saw the captured Jews, but not our family, with their crying children being marched by armed German soldiers (paramilitary, *Einsatzgruppen B*⁷⁴) and their sympathizers. Aron heard conversations among the villagers that said, "why are the children being taken? Why are they being blamed? Why are they going to kill the children? They are innocent!!" Later we learned they were all taken to one or two open trenches or pits that were already prepared in a field behind Vatshevitch. They were all slaughtered (by bullets) at the edge of the trench which became their grave.



Figure 48: *Ivatsevichi memorial at the site of slaughter in 1942, 6/2018*

74 Einsatzgruppe B and its subunit Sonderkommando 7b or Einsatzkommando 8 murdered our family!



Figure 49: Ivatsevichi memorial at the site of slaughter in 1942, 6/2018

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

All of the Jews (from the Ivatsevichi ghetto) were rounded up and marched to a field behind the village to a prepared trench, 10 meters by 5 meters, in size. Mothers were carrying with their babies. The Germans pulled gold teeth out of some of the Jews. The Jews were ordered to take off their clothes and line up at the edge of the trench. They were shot with machine guns in the back of their head and their bodies were buried in the trench. I heard the screams and cries of the Jews when they were being beaten then shot. I heard the shots of machine-guns. More than 290 Jews were buried, and the Germans took the Jewish clothes and divided them up. Those Jews who refused to go with the Germans were massacred; they were shot or hacked into pieces with axes. One-week later blood seeped through the ground and we had to pile more soil on top. The cruelest Germans were officers Skulka, Max, Biliffert. Much latter, Germans killed Russians, Poles, and Belarusian's and their bodies were buried in a trench in the field near the village.⁷⁵

Zwirownia gravel and sand pit – In 1960's a stone memorial was placed at the site were bones of the dead were unearthed.⁷⁶

German Anti-Jewish Policy – The object was to ensure that no Jews remained alive in the areas liberated by the Soviet army. The ideological need to exterminate the last of the Jews was reinforced by the fear that any surviving Jews would seek revenge for the terrible crimes committed against them by the Germans in the occupied Soviet territories.⁷⁷ The German attack on the Soviet Union and the annihilation of the Jews began on December 18, 1940 as "Operation Barbarossa." The Einsatzgruppen (Operations Group) of the Security Police and other SS units was authorized on March 13, 1941 by the German army to carry out criminal operations, mass murder and cruelty of civilians, in the territories under its jurisdiction and control by orders of Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich. The German army grouped Jews with partisans for

75 Ivatsevichi – Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate and Establish War Crimes of the German Fascist Invaders; GARF; RG-22.002M, 12/1944

76 Iwaacewicze. Ul. Czartkowa-miejsce egzekucji I zbiorowa mogila ofiar Zaglady

77 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.312

execution. The Einsatzgruppe (EG) was the size of an army battalion. The Einsatzgruppen subunit were known, as Einsatzkommando (EK) and was the size of an army company and the Sonderkommandos (SK) were the size of a reinforced platoon and documentation indicates that two thirds of the leadership had university degrees including doctorates and lawyers and bore the responsibility for the organization of the mass murder. Einsatzgruppe B with its subunits, Einsatzkommando and Sonderkommando 7, 8, and 9, had 665 members under the command of SS Brigadeführer Arthur Nebe from June to Oct. 1941. General Erich Naumann took charge of Einsatzgruppe B in Belorussia from November 1941 to February 1943.⁷⁸ Einsatzgruppe B subunit Sonderkommando 7b (SK 7b) was under the leadership of Adolf Ott from February 1942 to January 1943 and operated from Brest-Litovsk to Kobrin to Pruzany to Baranovichi (most likely murdered our family in Vatshevichi, Byten, Slonim and Kossov). Einsatzgruppe B subunit Einsatzkommando 8 (EK8) was under the leadership of Heinz Richter (lawyer) from April 1 to September 1942 and operated from Bialystock to Volkovysk (most likely murdered our family in Ruzhany, Zelva and Volkovysk).⁷⁹

In townships and rural areas, the extermination was carried out by small, mobile Einsatzkommando units who came to the area and were helped by local municipal authorities or local police, murdered all Jews in one blow before moving elsewhere to carry out another Aktionen (action). Special murder pits were dug prior to the extermination task, usually by local peasants on the edge of town away from the collection point. Transportation from the point of concentration (ghetto) to the murder pits was carried out usually on foot. The execution operations were carried out openly in sight of German soldiers, as well as the inquisitive local population. Eyewitness's stated- the condemned were forced to kneel on their knees or stand with their faces toward the trench. The commandos shot them in the back of the neck with machine guns. After being shot the people fell off the bank into the trench. The commando's sipped bottles of Vodka during the execution.⁸⁰ (See appendix)

Erich Naumann stood trial in Nuremberg and was found guilty of war crimes and was sentenced to death and was hanged on July 7, 1951. Adolf Ott was tried at Nuremberg, Military Trial II, and sentenced to death by hanging. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and then "released" May 9, 1958. Heinz Richter was tried and sentenced to seven years of imprisonment.⁸¹

78 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.51-55, 126

79 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.127, 129; Wikipedia; USHMM

80 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.133-136

81 Wikipedia and web search



Figure 50: Einsatzgruppe areas of operation, Wikipedia



Figure 51: Einsatzgruppe B with subunit SK 7b and EK 8 (1942)



Figure 52: *Ivatsevichi memorial⁸² at the site of slaughter in 1942, 6/2018*



Figure 53: *Ivatsevichi memorial, installed June, 2019*

82 Zwirownia gravel and sand pit – In 1960's a stone memorial was placed at the site where bones of the dead were unearthed.

CHAPTER V

PARTISAN (RESISTANCE MOVEMENT) PERIOD FOREST OF VOLCHE NORY (WOLCZE NARY, WOLF CAVES); WWII: AUGUST 8, 1942 TO JULY 1944

Finding our way to the forest

After we escaped from the Vatsseitsh ghetto on the night of August 5-6, 1942 we crossed the main road to the cornfield and approached the riverbank (Grivda River). We did not cross the river because it was too deep, and I could not swim “I did not want to drown!” We followed the riverbank that night and carefully passed a German soldier who was sleeping along the riverbank (Grivda River). We continued to walk that night and decided to stop before dawn at a trusted farmer that was between Vatsseitsh and Lubishchitsy. We passed other farmhouses that we knew but chose this particular family, because “we were sure they would hide us!” A safe house. The farmer was very poor and my father would always help this family with food and other needs. I knocked on his window before dawn and I saw his seven children sleeping, side-by-side, in clean pajamas. I was envious of them because they were safe and sleeping peacefully in clean clothing. He said, “Sorka” (Sara) what are you doing here, and I said, “we escaped!” He welcomed us without reservation and at personnel risk to himself and his family!! He hid us in his barn under hay and we stayed in his barn all day. His barn was near the road where Germans would pass frequently. He provided milk for Samuel and sour milk and a round bread for us. During that morning, which was August 6, 1942 (23 AV), we heard many grenades exploding and shooting from the direction of Vatsseitsh. I was sure, and later confirmed, that the Germans and their sympathizers (Polish, Belorussia’s) slaughtered our family members and other Jews in the outskirts of Vatsseitsh at the edge of a prepared trench.

Buried in this mass grave on the 23 AV, August 6, 1942 are my family – Chanah and Chaim Utschtein with their two sons Noeke, Yousef and infant girl, my niece Baila Bassar and most likely Ethel Zuchowicki with her daughter Lieba and younger daughter. I believe there were between 100 to 300 Jews in the Ghetto who were slaughtered during the ghetto massacre.

On this unusually hot and sweltering day the farmer kept his seven young children in his tiny house so that the children would not see us or hear Schmuel. He gave Yankel blue torn cotton work slacks, that were hand woven, to wear over his long underwear he escaped in. At sun down on August 6, he gave us a bottle of milk and a small round bread and directed us towards the forests of Volche Nory,⁸³ towards Slonim, where the partisans were.

All night, we walked towards the forest, but we lost our way and ended up in a cemetery. We kept walking and heard a wagon approaching at dawn. A local farmer, who we knew very well, was on a horse-drawn flatbed timber wagon and said clearly surprised, “Sorka (Sara), how did you escape from Vatsseitsh?” They have already killed all the Jews! He asked us, where are you going, and he offered to take us towards the forest where the partisans were camped. We sat on the long timbers of his wagon and headed toward the forests of Volche Nory. As the sun was rising on the second day after leaving the ghetto, we saw farmers we knew cutting field grasses with a sickle and baling hay. We told them we escaped and they were amazed we survived. We asked for the location of one of my former neighbors who had a small

83 Wolcze Nory forest, roughly 10-20 miles. – The Vapor, Btyna Bar Oni, 1976, p. 57

farm near the forest. We arrived that second day at another trusted farmer and we were welcomed without questions at great risk to their entire family!! They took us in, and the farmer's wife cooked potatoes, gave us milk and we hid and slept on straw in the barn until dusk. They then gave us directions to the partisans, and we reached the Volche Nory forest on August 8, 1942. We were told that my brother, Aron, and my brother-in-law, Beryl Bassar, were alive and had already arrived into the Volche Nory Forest and we were reunited. Of the 300 Jews in the Vatskevitch ghetto only six survived the ghetto slaughter (Shechita) that included five from our family and one Jewish refugee. Aron told us that they stayed at the same trusted farmer's barn on August 7, where we stayed the first day, August 6 and they reached the Volche Nory Forest in one day. These two families, true friends (righteous gentiles⁸⁴), risked their lives and their families' lives to help us, as did other true friends (righteous gentiles⁸⁵) in the ghetto! In the forest we met many Jews who escaped from the Byten, Kossov, Slonim and other ghettos and the well-armed Russian, Polish and Jewish partisans.

The First Six Weeks: August 8, 1942 to Sept 17, 1942

—HISTORY OF RUSSIAN AND JEWISH PARTISANS-SHCHORES BRIGADE—

In April 1942 four small groups of former Red Army soldiers set up a detachment under the name of Shchors (Szczors) Brigade and formed four companies, no. 51, 52, 53, 54 as a partisan group (resistance group) under the leadership of Lt. Pavel Pronyagin, (Proniagin), in the vast and dense impassable forests, marches, and swamps of the wolf caves ("Volch'i Nory", Volche Nory). They fought and raided the German forces and police garrisons and local peasants. They also cut German communication lines and disrupted rail lines. In May 1942, a small group of Jewish partisans from Slonim appeared in the forest and began working with Shchors detachment attacking German positions. A separate Jewish fighting unit mostly from Slonim was soon set up under the leadership of a Jewish commander, latter turned out he was Ukrainian (? Lieutenant Mikhail Balanovskii), and the group was assigned Shchors group no. 51. In July 1942 Shchors group no. 51 was reorganized as a Jewish fighting group under the leadership of a professional Jewish Red Army commander, Lt. Yakov Fyodorovvichi. He initially had 120 men and divided them into three-companies and each company into four units. He trained these new ghetto recruits with military discipline for three weeks to become fighting units and also established an organization structure of the group. Group 51 was well armed with automatic weapons, hand grenades and large supply of bullets.⁸⁶

*Gert Erren, the Gebietskommissar from Slonim reported on Sept. 26, 1942- "The Jews (from Slonim) were active in supplying stolen weapons and in stealing medicine from the hospitals (on behalf of the partisans-the "Bandits")."*⁸⁷*About 400 Jews from Slonim escaped to the forest.*⁸⁸

On the night of August 1-2, 1942, (Before we arrived in the forest) – a strong Soviet partisan force led by Lieutenant Pavel Proniagin of the "Shchors" units attacked the German garrison in Kosów Poleski (Kossov), called Operation Kossovo, driving the Germans out of the town. The phone lines were cut and the roads were guarded in and out of Kossovo before the operation. Cannon shots were fired and the Russian "Hoorah" preceded the machine gun and rifle fire attack. Fyodorovich Jewish unit 51 led his unit to the main street past the barbed wire ghetto fence and stormed the police barracks and church. In the battle, seven partisans were killed and ten wounded, and 100 Nazis and local policemen were killed. The Jewish partisans marched down the streets of the ghetto shouting in Yiddish, "Come out! We are the Yiddish partisans. We want to save you. Local Jews helped them find key supplies including food, clothing and weapons, which were taken back to the Forrest camp. Four partisan doctors, including Dr. (Czeslawa) Orlinski (my cousin, Abraham Orlinski's, wife), Blumovich, Lekomzev, and Kovarska

84 Ordinary people became our rescuers—"Righteous Among the Nations"

85 Ordinary people became our rescuers—"Righteous Among the Nations"

86 Slonim Jewery, Alpert, p.233-244

87 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.493

88 The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.493

collected all the medical supplies they could carry back to the forest during the attack.” The partisans returned to their base in the forest with the wounded. The partisans also took the younger Jewish men from the ghetto with them into the forests, but they left behind the older Jews, women, and children. (Sara Polonski, my future sister in law, her sister Bluma and brother Chaim Polonski escape from the ghetto around this time. Chaim entered the Volche Nory forest in 1942.) When the Germans returned with reinforcements, they shot the remaining 200 or so Jews. The armed Kossovo Jews were taken into group no. 51 which now numbered 150 fighters.⁸⁹

On August 8, 1942, the German forces retreated to Ivatsecichi (we escaped August 6) and abandoned Kossow Poleski. The partisans again controlled Kossow Poleski for several weeks after August 8, 1942, (we arrived into the forest) and kept the mill and timber factory running to boost their vital supplies. Local peasants visited the partisan camp to trade food for the services of skilled workers such as shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths and carpenters.⁹⁰

During August 1942, many of the 200 Jews that escaped from Byten joined Shchors unit 51, an important group of Jewish partisans originating from Ivatsevichi, Kosow, and Slonim.⁹¹



Figure 54: Memorial to the partisans overtaking the German garrison in Kossov – Operation Kosovo: August 1942, 6/2018

89 Slonem Jewery, Alpert, p.244-7; Kosow Poleski ghetto, USHMM document

90 Kosow Poleski ghetto, USHMM document

91 Byten ghetto, USHMM document



Figure 55: Family heritage visit: (L-R) Nancy, David, Josh, Aron, Abe, Debra, Phyllis, Melissa, in Kosovo, 6/2018



Figure 56: (A) Volche Nory forest, near village of Okunino(A)

The vast and dense forests of Volche (Wolcze) Nory (Nori),⁹² the wolf caves, with its marches and swamps became our home and refuge for the next two years. In August 1942, there were about 1200 or more Jews (civilians) including very young children, young adults, elderly, and families that escaped the surrounding ghetto slaughters. There was a smaller amount of heavy armed Russian, some Polish and Jewish soldiers, “the partisans (Shchors)”⁹³ that controlled the forest. The armed Russian partisans (*Shchors*) were in charge and if we did not follow their orders, we would be shot. If Germans or their collaborators approached the forest the partisans would actively fight them off.

In August 1942, the Jews within the forest included a Byten (Biten) group (*group 60*), Kossov group (*group 59*), large Slonim group and other groups. When we arrived in the forest we were part of the Kossov group (*group 59*) with a Russian commander who was later killed. The groups in the forest would be reorganized as movement of individuals came and went and as deaths occurred. In August 1942, a Jewish forest community was operating to provide necessary skilled labor like black smith, carpentry, tailoring, shoemaking, shelter, cooking and health care. Armed partisan guards provided protection and armed partisan patrols provided intelligence information and carried out missions to obtain food and supplies from the nearby villages. The farmer did not always provide us food and supplies willingly but they feared our guns.

The living and safety conditions during the first six weeks in the Volche Nory Forest were very good. Just as we arrived into the forest on August 8, 1942, Jewish and Russian partisans attacked Kossov and brought back to the forest by horse and wagon loads of “Jewish” goods that included clothes, shoes, house hold utensils, supplies, grain, food and medical supplies, as well as cows so our children could have milk. These Jewish goods were confiscated as the Germans established the ghetto. When we arrived in the forest, we had no clothes or shoes. I was given a beautiful brown wool coat, and a wool suit. I wore this suit and coat for the next two years, 1942 to 1944. During the winters, I wore the coat and, in the summer, I slept on the coat. I was also given a pair of shoes a Jewish shoemaker made in the forest. Later I found a dress in the forest. Yankel, Schmuël, Aron and Beryl were also given clothing and shoes. For those first six weeks, the weather was very comfortable, and we slept on the ground and had blankets and pillows. Schmuël was 16 months old and was just starting to walk and was healthy.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

The Jews of (Shchors) group ?56(59⁹⁴), Kossov (Kosovo) camp, built a life within the forest for themselves. They had a shortage of weapons but were useful as workers. Almost overnight, they built up a whole combine of workshops for tailoring, shoemaking, hat making, barbering, harness making and carpentry with tools mostly from Kossov or the nearby farms. For their work, they were paid in food. From the (Shchors) 51st unit they received a few rifles, bullets and grenades. From the nearby peasants they bought various weapons for cash and trade. Soon, unit ?56 (59-Kosovo group) had 40 rifles, and one automatic pistol.⁹⁵

Another confirmation – In the Kosova group, (Shchors) No. 59, there were 210 men and about 50-60 weapons. They set up workshops – a clothing factory, cobblers and a metal workshop. They had good skilled workers.⁹⁶

92 Zvi Shefet, chairman of Slonim Jewish Association in Israel wrote- the forest is near the village of Okuninovo on the way to Byten. Final directions were provided by a local forest ranger in Belarus to Abraham Ross in 2008. Not far from the Jewish town of Byten, Ivatsevichi, and Kossov, 30-40Km. southwest of Sonim, is the dense, impassable forests of Okunivo, Bullo Rafalovko – the “wolf caves;” The Destruction of Slonim Jewry by Nachum Alpert, 1989, p.234

93 Irregular military force, resistance fighters, behind enemy lines

94 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.274

95 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Nachum Alpert, p.254

96 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.119

SHCHORS PARTISAN BATTALION ORGANIZING CHART
BREST DIVISION - THE SLOINIM JEWS - GROUP 51

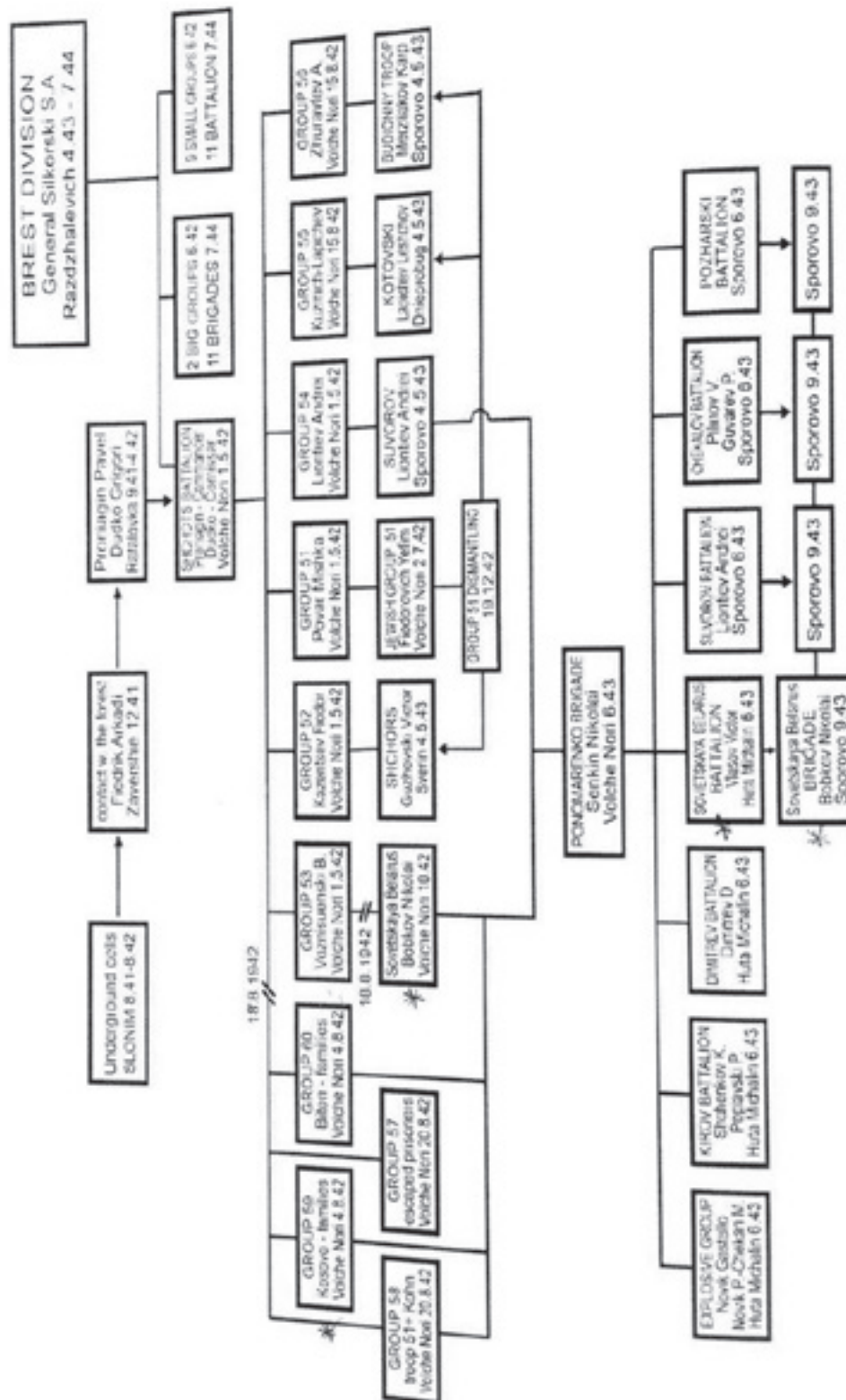


Figure 57: *The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.274, (* our groups)*

Unit 56 (59-Kosovo group), Jewish camp was divided into six groups. The first two groups consisted of the armed and able-bodied Jews. They conducted sabotage activities against the Germans and asked for or took food products and supplies from the farmers. (My brother Aron, Yankel and I were in this groups.) The third group led by the Jewish soldier, stood guard around the camp. The other three groups served the detachment in various jobs and administrated the economy. Feeding such a massive Jewish group was a big job for this staff. The armed Jews went out to collect food together with the three non-Jewish partisans, so that the peasants would know that the Jews belonged to the detachment. At night, the Jews went out to the villages to collect necessities like pots, kitchenware, and food. Some of the peasants contributed willingly, others did not. In every village cottages the partisans found goods that had been taken from Jews— clothing, furniture, dishes, even sacred books, which the peasants used as paper. Our Jews requisitioned products initially from well to do farmers. Every night they went out on the road to cut down telephone poles, or to loosen railroad tracks. One night they captured a German truck along with the driver. The group also went out to mills to grind corn and carried the flour to the bakery, which the Kossov Jews had organized in the village of Czizikes.⁹⁷

Another confirmation—The partisans took control of two flour mills, where they ground the grain which was confiscated from the villages that was supplying the Germans. Two young men from Kosovo, Group 59, organized the bakery in the village and baked the bread for the battalion.⁹⁸

The large family camp continued to grow due to the steady flow of Jewish refugees.⁹⁹

A kindergarten for the very young children (about 30) was set up by Dora Freedman and other mothers to keep the children busy.^{100, 101}

The Biten group, No. 60, was smaller and poorly armed.¹⁰² There were 200 of us (from Byten, family group) and operated a communal kitchen serving hot meals ... worked in the laundry ... mended clothes ... and brought sacks of potatoes from the fields and stored underground for the winter.¹⁰³

Czeslawa Orlinski MD (my cousin's wife) was imprisoned in the (Slonim) ghetto. She worked in the Slonim city Hospital during the German occupation and was the chairwomen of the health committee for the city of Slonim. She collected large quantities of medical supplies, equipment and medication which she brought to the partisans, Shchors battalion (51), when she and her husband Avraham Orlinski (my first cousin) escaped from the Slonim ghetto in (July) 1942 (to the Volche Nory Forest).¹⁰⁴

Shchors group 51, which numbered 150, set up booths, made out of branches, around a central clearing with a canvas tent that served as a hospital for seriously wounded fighters. The hospital was directed by Czeslawa Orlinski MD (my cousin's wife). At the end of the clearing, they built a kitchen. At the other end, a storehouse for weapons. Unit 51 began a search for discarded canon parts. In the forest, we found two wheels and the barrel of a 45-mm gun.¹⁰⁵

In the forest in late August 1942 I met my first cousin, Zelig Zuchowicki's wife, Vikhne, and beautiful daughter, Etl, who escaped from Byten. They stayed with the Byten group. (Vikhne and Etl Zhykhovitski (Zuchowicki) were killed in the forest on Sept. 30, 1942).¹⁰⁶ I also met my first cousin Avraham and his wife, Cheslava Orlinski MD, who escaped from the Slonim ghetto. I also met another cousin's husband from Slonim who was very wealthy and owned a lumber

97 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Nachum Alpert, p.254-255

98 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.161

99 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Nachum Alpert, p.254-255

100 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Nachum Albert, p.342

101 The Vapor, Btyna Bar Oni, 1976, p.62

102 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.119

103 The Vapor, Btyna Bar Oni, 1976, p.60

104 Ghetto Fighters House, Israel; the partisan.org

105 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Nachum Alpert, p.253

106 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich and Berstein – Died on Sept 30 or Feb. 19, 1943 in the forest.

mill. His wife, my cousin, and their children did not survive the Slonim massacres. He came to the forest with a pre-arranged sack full of Polish paper money, Zlotys. He offered my brother some of these Zlotys and my brother told him “you do not need money in the forest, just food and weapons!” I never saw him again after the first major action in September 1942, the Oblava. In August 1942 the Vatskevitch Rabbi (Rachman) and his wife and two sons, who escaped from the Byten ghetto, arrived into the forest with a lot of gold. Chaim Polonski, my future sister in laws brother and family friend, was 15 or 16 years when he escaped from the Kossov ghetto with a few other boys in or about August 1942 arrived into the forest. For the next two years, 1942-1944, my brother Aron made sure that Chaim was allowed to stay with us.

Itka (Utka) Vietchovia survived the Domamovo ghetto slaughter in August 1942 and made her way to the Volche Nory Forest. I got to know her well over the next two years in the forest. She told me that the Germans took her and other Jews to the edge of an open trench (pit) outside of Domanovo that was prepared to kill and bury all of the Jews. She stood naked with all of the other Jews at the edge of the pit. She was in front of her husband as her husband begun screaming and criticizing the Germans. The Germans began to shoot the Jews and her husband was shot dead and she fell into the open pit pushed by the weight of her husband. Luckily, she was not shot, and the open pit was not immediately covered. She clearly told me, she felt a warmth flowing over her and that was the blood of the Jews that were killed. She stayed very still and later crawled out of the pit viewing all of the dead Jewish bodies. She luckily made her way to the Volche Nory Forest.

Partisans – Shchors battalion marched southeast towards Pinsk “Blotes” (Swamps): August 1942

In late August 1942, the Russian partisan leadership (*Commander Pronyagin*) moved the large heavily armed partisan combat force with artillery (Shchors battalion), from the Volche Nory Forest (southeast) to the much larger Pinsk Forests and “blottes” (swamps). This Russian and Jewish partisan force included my cousins, Avraham and Cheslava Orlinski MD. Cheslava was an important physician for the partisans. We were very concerned as they left the forest!! No family camp members or any children or elderly were allowed to join this combat force and so we had no choice and remained in the Volche Nory forest.



Figure 58: (L) Sara Ross, (C) Aron Zuchowicki, (R) Avraham Orlinski, Israel 1981



Figure 59: Cheslava Orlinsky MD, Shchors Doctor, 1958¹⁰⁷

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

*During the 6 weeks, we had lived in the forest (Volche Nory), our morale has improved a little and now despair seized us again.*¹⁰⁸

The Forests of Volche Nory, wolf caves, became full of Jewish refugees (in 1942). Shchors scouts reported that the German divisions were being held up at the nearby rail stations (in order to comb the Volche Nory forests). [Reconnaissance reported that large German forces had disembarked from the train at Ivatzevitch and Domanovo stations.]¹⁰⁹ The partisan command (Commander Pronyagin) decided to move his partisan encampment (Shchors brigade) southeast toward Pinsk, which had larger extensive forests and blotes (swamps) for a more favorable partisan encampment. On about, August 20, (two weeks after we arrived in the forest) 1942 about 500 partisans that included young Jews (200) (including my cousins) Avraham Orlinski and his wife Dr. Czeslava Orlinski¹¹⁰ (was head of Medical Services of Shchors 51 until the end of July 1944)¹¹¹ moved south. On farm horse drawn wagons they took medical supplies, (2) cannons, ammunition, food and supplies. Horsemen and several motorcycles followed the infantry. No family groups, group 256 (group 59-Kosovo, 60-Biten),¹¹² were allowed to go with them. They fought off the Germans as they moved southeast.

*Left behind to feed and defend the Family camp was (Shchors) group 53 [Nikolia Vladimirovitch Bobkov was the commander]¹¹³ (later became the “Soviet Byelorussian” brigade) and one company of unit 52. Many of the Jewish partisans had relatives in the family camp that they left behind.*¹¹⁴

Jacob Shepetinski moved with the combat unit battalion (to Pinsk) and his parents and young brothers remained. His mother said to him “Yankele, may God keep and preserve you. We will not see each other again.”¹¹⁵

107 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.145

108 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.194

109 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.169

110 Ghetto Fighters House, Israel – she accompanied the fighters in 16 military operations and in the “rail lines operations.”

111 Ghetto Fighters House, Israel

112 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.274 – we were with the Kossov group.

113 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.163

114 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Nachum Alpert, p.262

115 Jacob’s Ladder, Jacob Shepetinski, p.54

Yudl Berkner the son of Kalman from Byten wrote that he and his two young sons, 7 and 14 were hiding in an area near the village of Dobromysl, about 17Km. from Byten ... A large well-armed band of partisans, several hundred in number, went through the village on a clear day. This was the Szczors [Shchors] brigade that had left the Wolcze (Volche) Nory forest. They were moving in the direction of the Pinsk marshes. To my great surprise, I saw among the partisans several Byten Jews who had succeeded in saving themselves from the slaughter (in the ghetto) and managed to get to Wolcze Nory. Our joy was great. We saw Jews from our own shtetl.

Here was Mikhl Minkowicz (Shaya Minkowicz's son), who saved himself during the first slaughter; Itshke Pinski (Leibe the broker's son) also saved himself through a similar chance; Lyuba Juzelewska (Eirshl Kalbowski's daughter), a survivor from the slaughter in Zlatowa; Shaya Ulanski (Moshe-Azyk's son); Yoshke Roczanski (Meirim's son); Avrahaml, the silent one (Eizl Pitkowski' son); Leibl Finkelsztajn the feldsher [barber-surgeon] and others from Byten.

The commander of the Jewish division (group 51) of the Szczors (Shchors) brigade, Fyodorovich, yielded to the request of the Byten partisans and agreed to have me and my two children join his group. We left the village of Dobromysl and went with the brigade. I remember that this was exactly on Shabbos Shuvah [the Sabbath between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, September 19th.] 1942. The Germans entered immediately after the Szczors (Shchors) brigade left Dobromysl. They took Yakov the peasant and his wife and child who had permitted me (Yudl Berkner) to spend the night with him, out of the village to the bridge over the Szczora River. They were all shot there, and their bodies were thrown into the water.¹¹⁶

“Oblava:” The German Noose (German Siege)

Sept. 17, 1942- Oct. 19, 1942 (Sept. 12-Rosh Hashana, Sept. 21-Yom Kippur)

In September 1942 after the large group of heavily armed partisans (Shchors battalion) moved (southeast) toward the Pinsk forest and “blottes” (swamps), the remaining partisans knew about a German Army build up that was close to the Volche Nory forest. We were very concerned for our lives and an action plan occurred. Jews and Russians barricaded all the roads leading into the forest by cutting many tree trunks. Potatoes were dug up out of the nearby fields and stored away in sacks and supplies gathered. In mid-September 1942 (Sept. 17) the German Army redirected their troops (*three army divisions, 30,000¹¹⁷-40,000¹¹⁸ soldiers*) and surrounded the Volche Nory Forrest. The German army tanks broke through the partisan log barricaded roads in very little time, maybe within one hour, as if nothing could stop them. The Germans surrounded us and attacked from all directions and airplanes reported the location of partisan units and dropped bombs. They shot at us with automatic weapons and our lives changed from an area of safety to an area of fear and death and we became critically endangered!! This overwhelming first major attack in the forest by the German Army became known as the “Oblava” (the Noose) as the German military surrounded the entire forest and cut off all contact, food and water to strangle us!

The “Oblava” lasted about 2 weeks. The German army initially stayed in the forest for about 3 or 4 days or more and then encamped around the forest for the next 2 weeks with tanks and so many soldiers. There were constant German Army raids during those weeks in the forests, killing countless numbers of innocent Jewish civilians. Initially we left our Jewish campsite and survived by running and retreating deeper and deeper into the swamps and marshes of the forest. We hid in gullies, ditches and thick brush and densely wooded areas with almost no food or water. There was one German raid after another and there was no way to leave the forest for safety or food. Countless defenseless men, woman and our beautiful children were murdered in cold blood. Half of the Jewish population was killed, and the dead were all around us! The Germans and their collaborators shot at us as if we were animals!!! Each day our lives and the conditions became worse; an impossible situation. Each day, more and more Jews in the family camp were killed from shooting or died from starvation. I cannot say it enough; they shot at us, defenseless civilians, as if we were animals!!

116 Pinkas Byten, Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich; In the Forest, Yudl Berkner, p.467-469

117 I. Linkov, Voyna v tylu vraga. p.325

118 The 51st. Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.196

After days of hiding within the swamps and forest from German shootings and lack of food and water during the Oblava, we were near a group of about 12 or 13 young men and one woman. They were formerly in the Polish army and were heavily armed with revolvers and rifles but were wearing civilian clothes. They were well known to us because they always went on the most dangerous missions fighting German soldiers with the Russian partisans. We saw them in an open, non-dense area, of the forest where the trees were tall but spaced far apart. Yankel and I attempted to approach them, but they would not allow us to move forward because they were concerned that Schmuel might cry. I was carrying Schmuel who was already so weak due to the lack of water and food that he could not cry and had a hard time just breathing! I told Yankel– “there is one G-d everywhere!” We moved on to a more protected area and sat in the cover of low dense bushes and trees as it began to drizzle. A young 15-year-old Jewish boy from Kossov crawled over to us and sat near Yankel and began to talk to him. The boy suddenly saw some Germans in the distance and said, “Oh Germans!!” and the boy ran away. Yankel also wanted to run, but I held on to his sleeve and said “Sit. What will be, will be” and luckily the Germans did not see us. By the time you see the Germans it is too late to run! I never saw this boy again. The dense bushes saved us, and we were very fortunate. In a short period of time, maybe about an hour, we were told that the Jewish group of 12-13 former Polish soldiers were surrounded by German troops and were captured alive and taken away in an open German transport truck. We were not afraid of being shot, “if not today then tomorrow,” but we were afraid of being captured alive!!

During the Oblava, Yankel and I were always together and constantly held Schmuel. We had no food or water for Schmuel and were constantly running and hiding in various parts of the forest especially the swamps. Due to lack of food and water all of our very young beautiful children, including Schmuel, could not survive due to deprivation or shootings. Some families only prayed that their children would die of natural causes! Samuel had no food except a small piece of dried bread I carried in by pocket for him to chew on. He passed away in my arms from deprivation of water and food on Yom Kippur 1942! We buried Schmuel (Samuel) who was 1½ years old in the forest. (Sept. 21, 1942 -10 Tishrei). We were separated from my brother Aron and my brother-in-law Beryl for over one week during the Oblava and I did not know if they were alive. Soon, we were so fortunate to see Aron and Beryl!

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

In mid-September 1942 enemy troops [3 German divisions, 30,000-40,000 soldiers¹¹⁹, Operation Sumpfiebert¹²⁰] were stationed on all the roads and towns in the area (around the Volche Nory forest). The two-family camps – the Biten (Byten) and Kosovo (we were in the Kosovo group) camps – remained in the area, which was now under the control of the (Russian partisan) Sovietskaya Belarussia troop (Shchors group 53, commander Nikolai Vladimirovitch Bobkov). The family groups ... fortified the roads leading to the Volchye Nory with felled tree trunks...burned the bridges around the forest...and set up guards ... potatoes gathered from the farms ... retreated to the swamps. On September 17, gunfire poured down on the camps. Nobody left the forest ... German planes were circling above the camp ... and checking.¹²¹

For the three days from September 17 to September 20, 1942 the nursing mothers in the (Byten family) group had nothing to eat (during the Oblava). They had all kept running for the three days. The five infants were crying pitifully as the Germans were screaming Halt! Halt! and firing their weapons blindly. On Sunday, September 20 (erev Yom Kippur) the group reached the clearing and spent the night there. The 150 survivors feel exhausted to the ground. The five babies demanded to be fed and the desperate mothers did not know what to do ... Weeping spasmodically half-demented, the five mothers suffocated their babies, one after the other, then tore the hair out of their own head or beat their own heads against the tree trunks. [...mothers...as if they had gone out of their minds.^{122 123}] Mothers with older children clasped them to their breasts. Everybody wept ... On the third day of the raid two partisans brought word that the Germans had burned down the partisan camps, killing many and taking the boots off dead bodies. The fourth day, Monday, was sunny and hot. They had no drinking water. People dug up the damp

119 I. Linkov, *Voina v tylu vraga*, p.325

120 Operation Sumpfiebert-large German Army operation against the partisans in September, 1942

121 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.193

122 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.194

123 The Vapor, Btyna Bar Oni, 1976, p.68

earth with their hands and strained the water through a cloth. At the end of the week, the Germans had left the forest. Some returned to the camp where they found bread, potatoes, meat and cabbage. The two German divisions had laid waste in many villages (around the forest).¹²⁴

Another confirmation – People were running like hunted animals from place to place with no food, no drink. Their strengths ran out, in the group, which started as 300 people were now only 100 ... Dead bodies were wallowing on all the paths ... On the Wednesday, the sixth day of the siege ... the group decided to move on, as here they would simply expire of hunger and everybody had reached the last of their strength. People envied their dead friends ...

Jews of the Kosovo camp were not spared this fate either ... Many Jews of the Kosovo camp fell in battle.¹²⁵

Another confirmation – thousands of Jews were murdered during the manhunts in Sept. to Oct. 1942 in the Volche Nory forest.¹²⁶ The German siege lasted 10 days only 170 out of 370 survived from our Byten group.¹²⁷ They (Germans) managed to wipe out the Jewish partisan troop based in the Volchye Nori, which was caring for families.¹²⁸

In a village adjacent to the Volche Nory forest the Germans brought the villagers together in a barn and then burned down the barn killing the villagers inside. A few farmers escaped to the forest and one elderly ill man survived to tell us the story. The Germans killed the local villagers and farmers to prevent them from helping the partisans with food and supplies. The Germans also killed one of our trusted farmer and family and burned down his farmhouse, near the forest, where we stayed the second day after escaping the ghetto.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

Village of Volchy Nury (Wilcze Nory) ... In the early days of widespread manhunts, yet before the Germans came into the forest in force, they overwhelmed the village around us and cut them off from us. ... A few hours after entering the village they rounded up all the people and chose a large number of men to dig large pits at the end of the village. There they threw in men, women and children – the greater part of the village population – whom they massacred; and before they left, the German set the whole village on fire. Not one house was left standing.¹²⁹

Another confirmation – They (Germans) burnt the village of Okuninovo, which is near the Volchy Nori (forest) and murdered the inhabitants.¹³⁰

Days after Yom Kippur 1942, during the Oblava, Yankel and I were desperate for food and we tried to leave the forest in search of food and water in a nearby village at the edge of the forest. As we approached the clearing at the edge of the forest German tanks shot at us and we dropped to the ground and crawled back into the forest! As we walked deeper into the forest, we luckily found potatoes that were stored away before the Oblava and we were fortunate to eat baked potatoes.

During the second week of the Oblava a group of Jewish boys went out on missions to again obtain desperately needed food from the local farmers fields, whose houses were burned down by the Germans. The mission was very risky, but they had no choice. They brought back cabbage, carrots and potatoes from their gardens and I made a large “kessel” (pot) of vegetable soup. Just as we sat down to eat the soup the Germans attacked us again and we escaped back into the swampy mud of the forest to hide and we never ate any of the soup.

124 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.344-5

125 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.195

126 Sefer ha-Partizanim, p.323

127 The Vapor, Bryna Bar Oni, 1976, p.72, 73

128 I. Linkov, Voina v tylu vruga, p.325

129 Yechiel Granatstein, The war of Jewish Partisans, 1986, p.171

130 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.196

Well over 50 percent of the Jews in the Volche Nory forest were shot or died from deprivation during the Oblava. Most young infants, children and elderly died. One very Orthodox man kept kosher in the forest by cooking his own food and used his own canteen and spoon made from wood. He died with so many others during the Oblava. One of our young Jewish boys, a neighbor from Lubishchitsy, originally went with the heavily armed Russian partisan command to Pinsk in August 1942, returned to the Volche Nory in Forest during the “Oblava”. He told us that the German Army already attacked the partisan group as they moved south and we should not try to go anywhere and to stay in the Volche Nory Forest, which we did! This young boy later returned to the Pinsk forest and survived the war. I saw him after our liberation in October 1944 in Vatsvitsh. There were 2 or 3 Jewish doctors in our group, but they had no medical supplies or medication to treat the injured. One Jewish physician and his very young blond daughter returned to the Vatsvitsh ghetto during the Oblava because of the dire conditions and were shot by the Germans in Vatsvitsh. I never saw my cousins from Slonim and Byten again after the Oblava. Rabbi (Rachman’s) wife and sons from Vatsvitsh were killed during the Oblava.

In late October 1942 Rabbi (Rachman) from Vatsvitsh became ill and totally confused due to the lack of food and the colder fall conditions. Some of the women in the family camp cared for him but he became so confused that he ate char-burned wood ashes and said “oh, so good” and soon passed on.

The First Year: 1942 to 1943

First Winter and Russian Anti-Semitism: 1942 to 1943

After the Oblava in October 1942 the Germans and their sympathizers would raid the forest every few weeks killing more and more Jews. As the first winter, 1942-43, was approaching everything was very bad, not only for the remaining Jews but also for the Russian partisans. There was not enough food for all of us; even a piece of bread was good. The Russian Partisans further separated their own camp from the Jewish groups. A few young Jewish women lived with the Russian Partisans, but the woman had no choice. I believe the Russian Partisans had communication equipment and they also obtained information from local farmers and villagers regarding the German activity. If the Russian partisans captured Germans, they would kill them, and one was even drowned in a latrine. The Russian partisans had their own guards on duty to protect themselves from the Germans and their collaborators. One Russian partisan that was on guard duty was found asleep. There were no excuses. The Russians brought everybody, Jew and Russian, together and we all watched as he was executed.

The Russian partisans were in total control and they confiscated all the weapons from the Jews after the Oblava. If anyone resisted, they were shot. One young Jewish Polish soldier arrived into the forest with his own rifle. A Russian partisan demanded that the Jewish soldier (*Schlomo Tchernechovski*) give up his rifle and when he refused, he was shot dead instantly and the rifle taken.

Almost immediately after the Oblava the Russian Partisans ordered the Jews to not leave the forest to obtain food. The Russian partisans “falsely” believed and accused the Jews of identifying the partisan locations within the forest. Even though it was risky, we had no choice but to obtain food from the farms around the forest. One Jewish man, Yankel Kalbusky, and two others were caught trying to leave the forest to get food and the Russian Partisans were going to shoot them. Yankel Kalbusky’s younger brother, age 13, cried and pleaded with the partisans, which saved his brother’s life. We were not only concerned about the Germans but also equally concerned about the anti-Semitic Russian partisans (*commander- Nikolia Vladimirovitch Bobkov*)!

In early November 1942 we were in desperate need of food so a group of young Jews, including myself, at great risk, decided to leave the forest and go to the town of Rozshinoi (Rozhinoy, Rozinoy, Ruzhany). I had relatives in Rozshinoi including my maternal uncle, Hazkal Orlinski and many cousins (Alter, Avraham, Avraham Yeshiahu, Chanoch, Milia, Shyndel, unknown)¹³¹ We thought our family was alive and we could obtain food! We knew the Russians would have killed us if they caught us leaving the forest. We left the forest at night and avoided the main roads and

¹³¹ Family martyrs who were killed – Rozhinoy sefer zikaron, Memorial book; our martyrs, Sokolowsky, 1957; Ruzhany translated, Meir Sokolowsky, p.351; Family Tree in appendix.

the German border crossings. As we entered the Jewish cemetery (? Kossov) a “black cat” appeared from nowhere and followed us. The cat continually weaved between our feet, slowing us down, and followed us all night as the cat constantly “meowed, meowed, and meowed”. We kept kicking the black cat, to get the cat out of our way, but the black cat stayed with us and slowed us down. At dawn, the cat disappeared as fast as it appeared, as we approached the outskirts of Rozshinoi. We approached a local farmer who thought we escaped from the Rozshinoi ghetto and asked us, where are you going? We told him we wanted to go to Rozshinoi and avoid the German border. He told us “last night, the Germans took all the Jews of Rozshinoi to Auschwitz (or Treblinka) (Volkovisk¹³² then Treblinka¹³³) and many other Jews were killed.” We cried like babies! The farmer gave us some food and then we quickly returned to the Volche Nory forest. We took sacks of potatoes back that we hid as we left the forest and found a pail near a farmhouse to cook them. When we returned to our campsite, we cooked the potatoes without salt or anything else. As I now reflect on it, I ask myself, was the cat a “Jewish cat?” That cat slowed us down that night, so we did not reach the ghetto and saved our lives!

In Memory of our Martyrs - Ruzhinoy and Environs (cont.)

Page	Family name	First name(s)	Maiden name	Sex	Marital status	Father's name	Mother's name	Name of spouse	Place of Residence	Children	Comments
213	ORLINSKY	Alter		m	M	Hazkal		Mila	Ruzhany	3	
213	ORLINSKY	Avraham		m	U	Alter	Mila		Ruzhany		
213	ORLINSKY	Avraham Yeshiahu		m	M				Ruzhany	1	
213	ORLINSKY	Chanoch		m	U	Alter	Mila		Ruzhany		
213	ORLINSKY	Hazkal		m	W				Ruzhany	3	
213	ORLINSKY	Mila		f	M			Alter	Ruzhany	3	
213	ORLINSKY	Shyndel		f	U	Alter	Mila		Ruzhany		
213	ORLINSKY	unknown		f	M			Avraham Yeshiahu	Ruzhany	1	

Figure 60: *Orlinsky family martyrs in Rozana: Memorial Book (Ruzhany, Belarus) Sokolowsky, 1979*

When Aron, Yankel and I entered the forest in August 8, 1942, we were with the Kossov (Kosovo) group (Shchors group #59).¹³⁴ After the Oblava with so many Jewish deaths the Jewish groups merged into one major group then latter reorganized into two groups, the active Jewish Partisans and the Jewish family group. My brother, Aron, had two years of training in the Polish Army and was fearless, aggressive and an active partisan member. Because of my brother Aron, we were part of the active Jewish Partisan group. The Jewish partisans established and provided guard duty and went on missions to the local farms, to obtain food and supplies, even though we feared the Russian Partisans. The group had about 30 to 40 young Jewish men and a few women. The Jewish partisans helped the Jewish family group and were in close proximity but functioned separately. The family group had no leader, but the Jewish partisan group provided protection in the form of guard duty and food, which was mostly potatoes. Chaim Polonski, age 15 or 16, was a family friend and stayed with us, although Chaim would not leave the forest, even for missions to get food.

Aron made a good-looking rifle, but it did not work. He found a rifle barrel in the forest and attached a hand made wood handle, a rifle butt. Until Aron received a working rifle, he carried this rifle on many missions looking for food and supplies, from the surrounding villages and farms.

The Jewish family group was larger than the Jewish partisan group. My brother in law, Beryl Bassar, was in the family group and cared for a 6 or 7-year-old beautiful bright-orphaned Jewish boy. Beryl cared for the boy as if he was his own son, making sure the child had food, bathed him, and combed his hair. Unfortunately, there was an unexpected German raid in 1943 and the boy was shot and killed within the forest. Beryl was also with a very nice intelligent Jewish woman with her daughter, whose husband was killed. He made sure that the Jewish lady and daughter had food, mostly potatoes and bread. This lady and her daughter were also killed within the forest with so many others.

¹³² Jacob Rosjanski parents, sisters and family lived near Volkovisk.

¹³³ Ruzhany, Memorial Book, translated, Meir Sokolowsky, p.237-244, 251-255, 310-314

¹³⁴ The 51st Brigade, The History of the Jewish Partisan Group from the Slonim Ghetto, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, English translation, p.274



Figure 61: (L to R) Sara Polonski Zuchowicki, Aron Zuchowicki, Tzepora Polonski, Chaim Polonski, Sara Zuchowicki Ross, Meir Polonski; (sitting) Channah Polonski, 1981 Israel

In preparation for our first winter of 1942-43 both Jewish groups worked together using all of their talents and craftsman skills to provide shelter, food, water, clothing and security. Our two Jewish physicians helped with sanitation and health care but had no medication or supplies. Food was in critically short supply and at starvation levels! We harvested many potatoes from the fields surrounding the forest and stored them in sacks. We even harvested green potatoes that were bitter, but we had no choice. My brother with the other active Jewish partisan men and woman, would raid local villages around the forest at night and obtain grain, salt, and other supplies, but still we ate mainly potatoes and we were happy to have potatoes. As long as Germans were not around, I and another lady would do most of the cooking for the Jewish partisan group outside in a large “kessel” (pot) suspended over an open wood fire. Water was very scarce, and we would either get water from the streams, which was cloudy from mud or from the shallow wells we dug in the forest. Occasionally frogs or mice were in the water but that was our situation.

Shelter was critical for the long harsh inhumane winter with its extreme cold temperature, frost and snow. My brother Aron and the other Jewish boys- built winter cabins (Zemlyankas¹³⁵) partially within the ground. One large partially underground cabin was about 11 x 11 feet in size, which was very nice. It took them a month or so to build and they used wood/logs boards that supported the walls. One area within the sidewalls was set up to store potatoes for the winter. Inside, two levels of planks were built along the sidewall as bunk beds, upper and lower. The roof was constructed of wood and stripped bark from trees, and then covered with moss and tree branches. They dug a shallow well for water within the cabin. The large cabin could house over 20 Jews (the second year it was used as our hospital). One very nice Jewish active fighter, 17-18 years old, whose name I believe was John built a small oven inside the cabin. As these cabins were completed within our camp the Russian partisans decided to take them over, seized them, by armed force and the Russian partisan officers used the large cabin! It would have been very nice for winter, but we had no choice, otherwise we would have been killed.

At this point we had no choice but to sleep outside on the snow-covered ground or under lean-tos made from the stripped bark of the tree as protection from the snow. When it was safe, that is no German raids, we would sleep around a large constant open fire. When the Germans were close, we could not start a fire because the smoke would give away our location. Some people had blankets, but I would sleep in my wool coat. Before the ground was frozen, we also built small underground bunkers that were covered with boards and stripped tree bark, branches and moss to camouflage them. We hid in these bunkers when the Germans or their sympathizers raided the forest.

¹³⁵ Cabin partially recessed into the earth

At the end of November 1942, during the first winter, the ground was frozen solid and it was bitter cold and snow laden. Food was increasingly scarce. There were constant German and sympathizer raids, manhunts, shooting at us as if we were animals. This occurred about every two to four weeks and many continued to be killed, especially in the family camp. We constantly moved from place to place or hide in our underground bunkers. The conditions continued to worsen, and Jews continued to die from deprivation and manhunts.

Our group initially had a Russian leader (Tatarikov) and at the end of November 1942 he warned us that the Russian Partisans wanted to kill the remaining Jews and we were not armed. Again, the Russian partisan's falsely accused the Jews of spying for the Germans by giving away the partisan positions in the forest. We feared for our lives from the Germans and the Russian partisans. The Russian partisans then ordered us to leave the forest but how could we and to where, so we did not leave!!! The Russian partisans (*commander-Nikolia Vladimirovitch Bobkov*) even had a date picked to kill all of the remaining Jews! We knew what could happen but what could we do?

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

The Russian political Commissar Tatarikov with a few other Belarusian Partisans called the Jews together (in the Volche Nory forest). The surviving Russian partisans had come to a decision he said. Jews would no longer be permitted to remain in the forest because it was clear that their presents had provoked the Nazi raids. They (falsely) accused the Jews who had been taken as prisoners by the Nazis had betrayed the names of peasants who had given them food. The Nazis then shot the peasants and burn down their homes. The partisans stated, the forest is for the (Russian) partisans, not for the Jews and their families.

The commissar explained that the partisans suffered great losses and, in their embitterment, were accusing the Jews of spying for the Germans. It was now dangerous for the Jews to stay where they were. It was unthinkable however for us to go back to the ghettos.

Commissar Tatarikov helped reorganized the Jews into four (Jewish) groups and instructed the Jews to stay away from the Partisans and they stayed 2 kilometers apart from each other. He appointed leaders including himself, Stankowski, Shepetinski, Shmuel Yudkovski, and Moshe Pitkowvski. The German attacks continued and the four groups kept moving from place to place trying to avoid German ambushes. In order to push the Jews out of the forest the partisan staff resorted to a tactic of terrorizing and robbing them. At the end of October or beginning of November (1942) the Jews were ordered to leave the forest. The 144 Jews refused to do so. The Jews were building earthen huts for the winter as they continued to fight the cold, hunger and hostile partisan conditions. It was now becoming almost impossible to dig potatoes out of the frozen ground even with an ax. Foraging in the forest were also many starving cats from the burn down villages. The Jews caught them, cook them and ate them. [The hunger was torture. ... (Russian partisans) would search the Jews and take from them everything that they found on them, even their shoes and clothes, warning them if they came again, they would kill them.¹³⁶]

At that time, a new commander was appointed to head the Soviet-Belarusian detachment. Vladimir Nikolayevich Bobkov had been a captain in the Air Force and was anti-Semitic. At the end of November, the partisans decide to kill all the remaining Jews in the forest. [On 6th December 1942, the partisans decided to gather together and 175 Jews were still scattered in the Volchye Nori and to get rid of all of them. The Jews turn again and again to the partisans, who they met, begging that they would allow them to get hold of some weapons and send them to battle operations. But they were always rejected.¹³⁷] The Jews were advised to get away while they still could run.¹³⁸

Partisans were not under any central control, the situation in each camp depended to a large extent on the attitude of the local commanders. Attempts to confiscate whatever arms the Jews had, a step

136 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.197

137 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.197

138 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.346-9

*tantamount to a death sentence for the camp, which could not exist without weapons. The Soviet partisan movement was anti-Semitic, as was part of the population of the area.*¹³⁹

*(Other report indicated – A large number of Jews were murdered in the Volche Nory forest by Bobkov's Russian partisans.)*¹⁴⁰



Figure 62: (R) N. V. Bobkov, commander of Soviet Belarus partisan detachment, 1942-1944¹⁴¹

139 Family camps in the forest, Yitzhak Arad, p.344, 347

140 Sefer ha-Partizanim, p.323, 331, 644

141 USHMM archives photo 56445, Faye Schulman photo, Belarusian State Museum-Great Patriotic Museum

Soviet Des'ant¹⁴² (parachute drop) – “A ness fun Got” – Our Miracle: December 1942

In late November 1942 Boria (Baruch) Judkowski (Yudkovski) from Byten became our leader and organized our activities and missions. Boria was a very bright, intelligent, well-educated (like a lawyer), and a trust worthy man. He even went to Israel before the war. Boria escaped from the Byten ghetto and entered the forest with his wife, son, father and brothers.

In December (6 or 8th) 1942 Boria Judkowski, was summoned to the Russian partisan “staab” (military headquarters). At the partisan headquarters Boria met two high-ranking Russian officers, Russian “Des'ant,”¹⁴³ who (most likely) parachuted into the forest. Boria told us the conversation. The Russian partisan (Captain Bobkov) asked the Russian Des'ants questions regarding military actions on the front lines in Russia. One asked if the Jews in Russia were fighting in the Russian Army? The Russian Des'ant told them that the Jewish Russian soldiers were very brave and fought with valor and honor on the front lines against the Germans and were first on the battlefield. The Russian Des'ant asked Boria if there were any other Jewish groups in the forest? They asked were the Jewish groups and Russian partisans working together and how were the Russian partisans treating the Jewish groups? Boria was very concerned and feared responding truthfully and openly and responded by beginning to “cry”!! The Russian Des'ant asked no further questions and immediately ordered the Russian partisans and the Jewish partisans to work together and to fight the common enemy, the Germans. They ordered that the Jews should become part of the active Russian partisan resistance and should be provided arms and ammunition.

This was a critical event for all of the Jews in the forest – “a ness fun got,” an act of divine intervention!! The Russian Des'ants changed our fate; otherwise the anti-semitic Russian partisans would have killed us. The Russian-Jewish relationship greatly improved as of December 1942. We could now save Jewish lives and fight the Germans!



Figure 63: (L to R) Boria (Baruch) Judkowski, Naomi (Shmuels wife), Shmuel Judkowski¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Des'ant is a Russian military term for airborne or parachute drop

¹⁴³ Sovetskiye partizany, p.332

¹⁴⁴ Ghetto Fighters House Israel, photo archives 39750, after WWII

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

In December 1942, the Soviet Union trained members of the Belarusian Communist Party [and envoys from the Supreme Partisan HQ ¹⁴⁵] for operations behind enemy lines arrived. They were parachuted in late 1942 to early 1943 to re-organize the partisans into brigades and maintain contact with the USSR for command, supplies and discipline. The basic goal of the Soviet partisan movement was to help defeat the Germans by striking at military and economic targets.¹⁴⁶ The Russian envoys, imposed law and order on the partisan movement ... and wanted full account of their operation and supervised their instructions.¹⁴⁷

Other documentation – Suddenly on December 8, 1942 a sleigh came riding up to the Jewish encampment with Capt. Bobkov and two Red Army men [parachutist...from the Soviet rear guard, Fedka ‘Polkovnik’ (a colonel) into the the Volvhe Nary forest¹⁴⁸]. The unexpected guests took place around the campfire and summoned all the Jews to a meeting. 72 men and 63 women and children lined up. The Red Army officers spoke and stated they believe that the Jews were capable and devoted partisans who should be used in the life-and-death struggle against Hitler. You should now re-organize them to become active again in the (German) fight. Bobkov appointed a commander to be in constant communication with the Jews and was now turning over four rifles and ammunition to the Jews so they could go into the villages for food.¹⁴⁹

Bobkov’s 53rd group ... was organized into a battalion with the name of Sovetskaya Belarussia. Many of the peasants and residents ... in the area joined them. These were unmistakably anti-semitic people ...

... the murderous rampage of anti-Semitic partisans stopped. ... a Jewish unit from the family camp was attached to the Sovetskaya Belarussia brigade responsible for supplies of food and other missions (sabotage, guards) ... and numbered 46 people [including Aron Zuchowicki, Jacob and Sara Rosjanski], was commanded by Boria Yudkovski. 56 people remained in the family camp On 23rd July 1943 when the number of partisans reached 400, the troop became a brigade, and Bobkov, its commander¹⁵⁰

“Boyevoya” (Boya-voya)¹⁵¹ Partisans: December 1942

Ponamorenko brigade, unit (otraid) Sovetskaia Belarus.

The Russian partisan and the Jewish Partisan group began to work together and became a stronger active combat and resistance group. We called them the “Boyevoya” (Boya-voya) group, that is combat armed and ready to fire (Ponamorenko brigade, Unit (Otraid) Sovetskaia Belarus^{152,153}) in December 1942. The Russian partisans turned over rifles and ammunition to the Jewish partisans in December 1942. About 15 to 17 of our Jewish Partisan boys, Boyevoya group, including my brother Aron, (also Yakimovski, Ostrovski and Plotnik¹⁵⁴) went on sabotage missions to cut down phone and communication poles and lines. This included the Slonim phone and telegraph (along the Slonim-Ruzany highway¹⁵⁵) lines that controlled the major German communication. There were constant joint Jewish and Russian Partisan sabotage missions attacking the Germans and their supporters. This included derailing and exploding supply train lines and soldier transport trains (Domanova-Lesnaya line¹⁵⁶) (War of the Rails using TNT), as well as sabotage activity killing many Germans!

145 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.11

146 Rescue attempts during the Holocaust, Jewish Family Camps in the Forrest, p.344.

147 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.12

148 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.197

149 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.349-350

150 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.266-7

151 Russian- for combat armed and ready to fire.

152 Jewish Partisans in Belarus 1941-1944, Gerasimova, Minsk, 2005, Ponamorenko brigade, unit (otraid) Sovetskaia Belarus

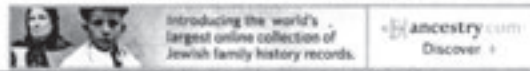
153 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.274

154 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.354

155 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.350

156 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.350

Jewish Partisans in Belarus 1941-1944



Searching for Surname zuchowicki (D-M code 457500 or 447500 or 457450 or 447450)					
Number of hits: 21 Run on Tuesday 29 May 2012 at 14:12:33					
Name	Patronymic	Date of Birth	Last Residence Oblast (Administrative division)	Brigade Unit (Otriad)	Date of Death
ZHUCHOWITSKI, Aron	Abramovich	1907	Polotski Brestskaja	Ponamorenko Sovetskaja Belarus'	
ZHUCHOWITSKI, Boris	Yosifovich	1904	Berzinskaja Pinskaja	Bodinski Kotovskaja	
ZHUCHOWITZKI, Giles	Gerdovich	1904	Ditkova Brestskichokaja	Pobeda' Pobeda'	

Name	Patronymic	Date of Birth	Last Residence Oblast (Administrative division)	Brigade Unit (Otriad)	Date of Death
ROSJANSKI, Ya		1919	Kosovo Brestskaja	Ponamorenko Sovetskaja Belarus'	
ROSJANSKI, David	Davidevich	1904	Chelno's Hall Brestskaja	Davidskaja Sovetskaja	
ROSJANSKI, Yankel	Yankelovich	1910	Stary Brestskaja	Sovetskaja Belarus' Ponamorenko	

Name	Patronymic	Date of Birth	Last Residence Oblast (Administrative division)	Brigade Unit (Otriad)	Date of Death
YUDKOWSKI, Gerasim	Talmonovich	1901	Stary Brestskaja	Ponamorenko Brestskaja Belarus'	
YUDKOWSKI, Boris	Talmonovich	1901	Stary Brestskaja	Ponamorenko Brestskaja Belarus'	

Figure 64: Jewish Partisans in Belarus 1941-1944, Jewish Gen website (Aron Zuchowicki, Yankel Rosjanski)

My brother, Aron Zuchowicki,¹⁵⁷ was a very active member of the group and went on all combat missions. Yankel,¹⁵⁸ Boria¹⁵⁹ and his brother (Shmuel) and I were also members of the same unit. We actively fought the Germans and obtained food and rations from the local villages that surrounded the forest. The Jewish and Russian Partisan now had a unified security guards, patrols and active combat missions. The Jewish boys (young men) went first on the active combat missions! Even younger Jewish boys became active fighters like John who was 17 or 18 years old. He kept a detailed daily diary of the events in the forest. He went on many combat missions and in 1944 during one mission he was shot and killed, and his diary was lost.

My brother, Aron Zuchowicki, went on partisan combat missions at every opportunity, as if he had no fear. So many partisans were injured and died from gunshots during the combat and food retrieval missions. Food and supplies obtained from the local villages and fields were transported by horse and wagon to our forest camp. On one mission my brother and others went out to a local village at 10 or 11 pm to obtain hay for our horses. The Germans surrounded them and we could hear the shooting. Initially, a few of the partisans returned without my brother. I was so upset and I thought the worst! My brother did luckily escape and soon returned. I was always very concerned about my brother's safety during his missions.

¹⁵⁷ Jewish Partisans in Belarus 1941-1944, Gerasimova, Minsk, 2005

¹⁵⁸ Jewish Partisans in Belarus 1941-1944, Gerasimova, Minsk, 2005

¹⁵⁹ Jewish Partisans in Belarus 1941-1944, Gerasimova, Minsk, 2005; Baruch (Boria) Judkowski, Partisan squad commander.

Wounded and decorated in battle. Carried out sabotage actions targeting trains, cars, telegraph, communication equipment. Took part in combat and ambushes and smuggling ammunition; Ghetto Fighters House Archives

We had constant Jewish and Russian guards around our forest campsite and the “sthab” (partisan military base) that rotated every 2 or 3 hours around the clock. We also had patrols on foot and by horse that gathered information from villagers and informants. We knew when anyone would enter or leave the forest.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

From Dec. 1942 to Jan 1943 the Jewish partisans were given orders to take out (80) telephone lines (and telegraph poles by January 10¹⁶⁰) on the Slonim-Ruzany highway and to blow up (and derail) a train on the Domonova-Lesnaya (rail track) line (by January 25¹⁶¹). Explosive material (TNT) was supplied to our group.¹⁶²

My brother Aron, a skilled blacksmith, with the assistance of another blacksmith repaired a damaged artillery gun that was left in the forest. They fired it against the Germans, and it worked striking the Germans but they had very limited rounds of ammunition. The artillery gun stayed in the forest until the Russian Army liberated us in 1944.

One lady with three children entered the forest and joined our group. Her husband was killed by a German sympathizer in a nearby village. The partisans went to the village and brought him into the forest and tortured him over an open bonfire and then revived him with water until he provided information about the Germans and then he was killed.

During one German attack at the end of December 1942 the Germans destroyed our partial underground cabins (Zemlyankas, dugouts) in our forest camp. Our informant in the local villages warned us about the attack and we hid in our underground bunkers that were camouflaged, with branches, peeled tree bark and moss. Our Jewish leader, Boria Judkowski, and his entire family were in one underground bunker. A German threw a hand grenade into their underground bunker and Boria caught the hand grenade and threw it out before it completely exploded within the bunker. Boria’s son was injured but survived the attack. Many Jews were killed in this and other attacks. Over the next two years the Germans killed Boria’s parents, wife and son. Boria and his brother (Shmuel) Judkowski survived the war and immigrated to Israel.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

In late December 1942, a new German attack was being organized, that we learned about from the local villagers near the forest. The partisans made preparations to take cover in underground bunkers that were camouflaged. We also had time to bring in extra potatoes from the fields and food supplies. We had horses and wagons in the forest. A horse was slaughtered and cooked. Water was a problem. The German attacked with gunfire and hand grenades in late December 1942. Dousing the campfire, the Jews ran into the underground bunkers they prepared the partisan camp was again burned down. The dead were buried after the attack.¹⁶³ Almost half of the Jews in the family camp were killed in this second major raid.¹⁶⁴

On 24th December, the Germans already surrounded us. The Germans threw hand grenades by every tree that was lying on the ground. One grenade hit the shelter of the Yudkovski family (wife-Seina, son-Uri) were nine people were hiding. Boria was sitting in the entrance and managed to catch a grenade and throw it ... the grenade exploded and many were wounded. On 28th December people left their hiding places, tended the wounded and buried the dead.

On 20th January 1943, the Samookhova (civil guards—collaborated with the Germans—who were well armed and trained by the Germans) from Biten attacked our camp.¹⁶⁵

By mid-January 1943 during our first winter we completed the construction of a new camp with about twelve log cabins, some partially underground cabins, with stoves for heating and wells for water. During that first winter, there

160 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.197

161 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.197

162 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.350; Sara Ross testimony

163 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.353

164 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert, p.354

165 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.198

was constant snowfall and the Germans continued to attack us every two to four weeks. During the attacks when we did not have time to hide in our underground bunkers we ran. Most people ran in the same path, one after the other, as the Germans were shooting at us. I decided that I would not follow the same common trail but would run off the trail in a zigzagging pattern in the deep snow. Beneath the snow was underlying branches and brush that would make me occasionally trip and fall. Some members in our group thought I fell because I was shot but I felt it was safer running off the trail than running following each other.

In the family camp, there was an older woman, about 60 years old, named Cina Volk (Wolk) from Kossov. She arrived into the forest with two young beautiful daughters, Nhome and Ryvka, and her son. Her son was very young and worked very hard and became an active Jewish partisan fighter. During one German raid we escaped from our camp. Cina Volk also ran but fell face down in the snow. As the Germans approached her, they kicked her, and she did not move! They thought she was dead and removed her good boots. In time, Cina returned to our camp without her boots and told us what happened. Cina Volk and her three children survived the war and immigrated to Israel.

Spring 1943

In the spring of 1943, after Passover,¹⁶⁶ we received intelligence that the Germans were going to attack us again in the Volche Nory Forest. We made preparations, as we always did, and hid in our camouflaged underground bunkers. The Germans and their collaborators attacked us and again we had more wounded and deaths.

Later in the spring of 1943 one of our young Jewish girls, Mina (Payevski), was on guard duty. She was one of the very few Jewish women in the Jewish partisan group. She would participate in guard duty or go on raids to obtain food from the local villages, but she did not participate in the active combat missions or bombing of rail lines. Mina was a tall beautiful blond from Slonim. Her husband was a physician and was killed in the Slonim Ghetto. She had a very young daughter that she gave to a Slonim farmer for protection before she escaped to the forest. Mina would always tell me that, if she survives the war, “at the least, I will have my daughter!” One day on guard duty, two of our young teenage boys, Chaim Polonski and Horashansky came up to her and started joking with her by saying, “Mina, Germans! Mina, Germans!” These boys then actually saw Germans approaching from across the stream. As the boys were running away, they shouted to warn Mina, “Mina, Germans! Mina, Germans!” Unfortunately, Mina did not believe the boys and the Germans shot and killed Mina.

On another day, I and one other woman began to bake “platkes” (flat pancakes), like matzos. We just finished cooking them and were going to serve them when the Germans attacked, and we immediately escaped without eating any of the “platkes.”

Second Year and Winter in the Forest: 1943 to 1944

We prepared for the second winter, 1943-44, by building about 12 small houses from lumber and logs on the ground, but not in the ground as we did during the first winter of 1942-43. At this time, we were working very close with the Russian partisans. The Jewish family camp was growing much smaller as members were killed by the Germans or died from the forest conditions. Our Jewish Partisan group, Boyevoya group, and the Jewish family camp were now together as one group. We gathered many sacks of potatoes from nearby farmers’ fields for winter. We had a lot of potatoes in the fall that year. One time in the fall the boys went out on a mission and I placed many potatoes in the hot wood ashes and baked them. Before the boys returned, I must have eaten 10 potatoes without salt or anything else and became so full I could not eat potatoes for some time. When available we gathered barley from the fields near the forest or from the farmer’s supplies in preparation for winter. Overall the second winter in the forest was better than the first year but still very difficult. Food was a little better but still very difficult to obtain. German manhunts continued every few weeks as the first year and we increased our resistance and actions fighting the Germans.

¹⁶⁶ Passover, April 20-27, 1943



Figure 65: *Volche Nory forest 2008*



Figure 66: *Volche Nory forest 2008*

One of my good friends, Bashkie Kosofsky, had a Russian boyfriend, Nickolie Nickoliavitch, from Podstariny. Nickolie was in the Polish army during WW2 and was captured by the Germans and transported west during the war. He escaped by jumping from the train and made his way back to the Volche Nory Forest and joined the Russian partisans in 1942. In 1942 Nickolie placed Bashkie on a farm near Kossov, where she worked. To keep her safe Nickolie threatened the farmer by telling him he would burn down his house if he did not protect her. During the second winter, 1943-44, Nickolie brought Bashkie from the farm into the Russian partisan camp in the Volche Nory Forest, where they lived together. Nickolie was a well-respected aggressive partisan fighter and he liked us so he helped us in the forest. We continued to hide in our camouflaged underground bunkers when there were German attacks and raids.

Typhus Epidemic: February 1943

We had two Jewish doctors in our Jewish group who organized sanitation and provided health care with minimal medication and supplies. Our Jewish physicians would also help local farmers and villagers who lived near the forest. One of our physicians (Dr. Lolek Berkowitch)¹⁶⁷ went to a village near the forest to help a villager that was ill with Typhus.¹⁶⁸ That physician became the first person in our group to become infected with Typhus in the winter of 1943/44 and he exposed and infected our forest camp. One young Jewish girl (?Tayna Imbat or ?Lyuba) cared for the physician when he was ill and then she developed Typhus. Typhus spread rapidly by body lice to almost everybody. We used our partial underground wood cabin that we built in 1942 as a hospital. At that time, we had 5 to 10 patients in the hospital. Itke (Utke) Vietchovia from Dominovo and I helped care for those ill with Typhus. Itka had Typhus as a child and I believe I had a mild case as a child. I then became ill during that winter and the doctor thought I had Typhus, but I only had a cold. For sanitation and disease control we would cook the clothing in boiling water of all the patients who had typhus to kill the body lice. We also cooked our drinking water for sanitation reasons. Chaim Polonski contracted Typhus and became confused with delirium, which was not unusual. He would shout in his confused state as if he was singing “typhus plamentsie, typhus plamentsie ...”

Another Jewish man became so confused with delirium from Typhus that he would get off of his bunk in our hospital and attempt to run outside. Itke was scared of him but I used a broom and held it across my body near the door to block him from running out and then he would return to his bunk. Boria Judkowski wore a fur coat that he got from a farm that must of have had lice and he also developed Typhus. Yankel wore this same coat and he also developed Typhus.

My husband, Yankel, had the most severe case of Typhus in our group. In February 1944 he was severely ill, confused, and very febrile for 9 to 10 days. On the eighth day, Yankel developed an extremely high fever (crises) and his lips turned blue and teeth became black. He perspired to the point where he was totally drenched, and I needed to change his clothing. In his very confused and delirious state he shouted out phrases, but he did not move from the bed. I was very concerned and the doctor told me, if he survives this night, which he might not, he should survive. I stayed with Yankel the entire time. He was ill in bed for three weeks, and then he slowly improved. His level of consciousness, strength and his speech slowly improved over the next few weeks. After this illness (Typhus encephalitis) he gradually developed a mild tremor starting in 1944. His tremor and movement disorder was progressive and he was diagnosed as having Parkinson’s disease from Typhus Encephalitis in Linz, Austria. No Jews in our group died from Typhus but one Russian partisan died from Typhus.

It took Yankel a long time to recover and he needed a cane for some time when walking. While Yankel was recovering German sympathizers attacked us in late winter of 1944 and we needed to leave our camp and move out rapidly but Yankel could not walk fast. The Russian and Jewish partisan covered Yankel in the deep snow with more snow for protection. During the attack, the Russian and Jewish partisans killed the German sympathizers and took their sled, horse and food supplies. The partisan group led by Nickolie retrieved Yankel from the snow and gave Yankel some of the food, including meat and bread, which was a significant help in his recovery.

Spring 1944

At the beginning of spring 1944, we were ordered by the Russian partisans to get immediately organized and get prepared to move out from our forest camp. The partisans received information about an impending major German attack or even possibly the German Army retreating west. Yankel was fully recovered from Typhus and he was very strong and walked better than I did. Over 100 people, Jewish and Russians, marched south out of the Volche Nory Forest to the nearby Hutenskie Forest (? Huta Mikhalin forest). A few Russians partisans were very ill and severely injured and could not move out, so the Russian partisans shot and killed them in order to prevent them from being tortured and providing information to the Germans. We marched all night and the next day to the Hutenskie Forest (? Huta Mikhalin forest). We crossed a shallow river, which still had ice floating on it. I could not swim but we held each other’s hands as a human chain to avoid drowning. The icy water was up to my chest and was bitter cold and our

¹⁶⁷ The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.204

¹⁶⁸ Typhus – *Rickettsia prowazekii*, gram-negative aerobic bacteria, carried by lice. Typhus epidemics was a significant problem.

clothing was drenched. We dried off as we marched during the very cold weather. My brother, Aron, and others took two horses and wagons with supplies through the icy river. During the march, we did not even stop to eat. Without food, constant walking, and frigid temperature, I became very weak and could not continue. My brother, Aron, and Yankel held me up, one on each side, as we walked and in time I felt better. We stayed in the Hutenskie Forest for the next few days and slept on the cold ground and then returned when it was safe, to our forest camp in the Volche Nory Forest. After the difficult second winter, Typhus and wading through the icy river, Yankel began to have a minor tremor but he was still strong and could work and provide patrol duties.

During the second year in 1944, the Germans would not only attack and kill Jewish and Russian partisans they continued to kill local villagers that surrounded the forest. In one nearby forest village, the Germans ordered all the villagers including women and children to gather for a speech in a barn. The Germans surrounded the barn and killed all of them by burning down the barn with the villagers inside. The Germans thought the villagers were helping the partisans, but I must tell you that most villagers did not voluntarily help the partisans, at least not often, but some did provide information about the Germans that was useful.

Man Hunts and Inhuman conditions Two years in the forest!

For the two years we survived in the forest there were so many raids every two to four weeks. The Germans and their sympathizers would attack us, “shooting at us as if we were animals!” During the many German raids, I was often separated from Yankel and Aron and I did not know if they were alive. During the second winter one of my close girlfriends from Kossov, a Hebrew teacher, would always reassure me by saying that we will survive as long as the “coil” (bullet) does not strike us. During one attack I was running with my girlfriend behind me in the same path due to the deep snow. I suddenly heard “Oh!!” and my girlfriend was shot and killed as so many others innocent civilians were shot and killed.

After one massive shooting attack in 1944, calm finally occurred, and I saw so many Jews wounded and killed. I was so happy to see Mary Horaschansky who was in the forest with her husband and brother. She told me, although it was not correct, that the Germans took many Partisans as prisoners and she thought we were the only survivors. As Mary and I were returning to the camp we saw one young lady actively bleeding from her gunshot wounds in her leg and arm. She could not walk so we tried to help her, but we could not. We returned to the camp in hopes of getting help to retrieve her. At our camp, there was so much confusion due to so many dead and injured and we could not get any help for her. By morning she managed to walk back to our camp still bleeding from her leg and arm wounds. She was as pale as the snow because of her blood loss but she survived the war. Our Jewish physicians treated her and the other wounded with very limited medical supplies. Later, “thank G-d”; I finally saw my brother, Aron, Beryl and Yankel.

Henna Duckson was a good friend and my cousins, Zelyk Zuchowicki’s, sister-in-law. She arrived in the forest in 1942 with her young infant boy, as I did with Schmuel, and her husband, who was a shoemaker. Her child, like Samuel, died in the forest from deprivation as so many other young beautiful children. Henna would always follow me in the forest especially when there were German raids because I was well oriented, and I knew my way around the forest. As she followed me, she would say to me “Sara, Sara – Germans, Germans are around us!” Henna and her husband survived the war and returned to Byten in 1945. She had a child after our liberation and as far as I know she could still be in Byten.

Two weeks before the Russian Army liberated us in July 1944 my brother in law, Beryl Bassner, and others went out on a mission to retrieve food from a local village. Beryl was in the front of the group and German Sympathizers attacked them and he and others were shot and killed. One partisan was shot in the arm and recovered. At night, my brother with other partisans retrieved those that were dead. The dead, Jew and Christian, including Beryl were buried in a common grave in the forest.

Life in the forest for the two years was inhumane and nearly incompatible with human life. The winters were harsh, with snow up to the knees from November through April and the temperature was well below freezing. Most died

from the deprivation, hunger, exposure, health conditions but mostly German manhunts. By 1944 the few surviving Jews, Jewish partisans and family camp members, were together in one group. The family group members consisted of 10-15 older Jews and older teenagers with no surviving children.

I never thought I would survive and be liberated! I thought “if not today, I would be shot tomorrow” as so many others. But when you hear the “coil” (bullet) fly around you and over your head – you run!! “What will be, will be.” In the forest the young adult boys and girls would laugh, sing, and dance even when they were hungry. We lived for each day. When I suggested saving some food for another day, the boys would tell me, cook it all today. Who knows who, will be alive tomorrow!

Russian and Jewish Partisan Sabotage Activity “War of the Rail-tracks” 1942 to 1944

From 1942 to 1944 the Russian and Jewish Partisans continued active sabotage missions against the Germans especially disrupting and detonating the German rail lines and trains (*War on the Rail-tracks*). In 1944 one high-ranking Russian partisan officer was severely wounded with multiple bullet wounds during a German military fight and was brought back to our camp on a horse drawn wagon. He was always very brave and led many of the combat actions,” into fire and water” against the Germans. A bodyguard protected him day and night and Cina Wolk’s daughter took good care of him. Our Jewish physicians also cared for him, but they had limited medication and medical supplies. The Russian partisans had communication equipment and a Russian plane landed near the forest and took the high-ranking partisan officer to Russia for medical care. We thought that they would also take Cina Volk’s daughter back to Russia with him, but they did not.

— TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY —

In the operations of the “War of the Rail-tracks”, as it was called, the operation to paralyze the movement of the enemy trains, Jewish saboteurs excelled. Airfields were set up in almost every partisan area on which planes from the Soviet rear would drop military equipment – bricks of explosive material TNT (“Tol” in Russian) [ammunition] and medicine and first aid materials. Eventually landing strips were set up in the forest where instructors and army commanders would land and, on the way back, the planes would take back those who were seriously wounded.^{169,170}

Other documentation—The partisan troops were spread over an extremely wide area, and they had overrun the rail tracks and main roads on the Breast–Baranovitch and the Breast-Minsk lines. Dozens of sabotage groups were active on the railway lines and on the road, and they sabotaged both transport and transit (trains) and caused heavy losses in (German) military equipment and supplies. ... The partisans of the Shchors troop sabotaged 390 railway tracks. They were taught by professional saboteurs who were parachuted from the Soviet rear guard.

...radio communication worked every day...and intelligence (and reconnaissance patrols) improved... radio transmission was received from Moscow; reports were sent on partisan events and requests were conveyed.

Supplies and equipment for partisans were dropped by sacks from the rear. Sometimes envoys (with the latest materials and methods of sabotage) would parachute in, sent from the rear-guard partisan supreme command. They would fix the times of the drop (and the number) via the radio and would prepare markers from birch tree bark, which they would arrange according to a pre-agreed sign and set a light. The bark burned very well.

169 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.12-13

170 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.305 (July 1943)

The need arose to prepare a landing strip. The planes that landed would bring materials and equipment, which couldn't be dropped by parachute. On the way back the planes would fly out the severely wounded who couldn't be treated in partisan conditions ...

The partisan squads of saboteurs would reach the main roads, set up ambushes and successfully sabotage the rail tracks and telephone lines. The explosives were mainly a sabotage brick ("Tol" to make TNT) with a spark plug. The cable was attached to it, stretched over the ramp and its other end held by the saboteur. When the train arrived, the saboteur would pull the cable, activating the spark plug and causing explosion on the rail line. The engine and usually the carriages would come off the track. ...other explosives were placed under the rail line and were activated by the weight of the train.

Partisans were active on the roads too. They would wipe out enemy cars and prevent the enemy transferring supplies to the garrisons and sending farm produce to Germany.

*Ambushing on the road gave the participants important information. In the rucksacks (backpack) of dead soldiers and officers and in the pockets of their clothes, they would find military documents that were very valuable for intelligence ... important material was transferred to the rear.*¹⁷¹

*More documentation – In 1944 the partisans built their own airfields in the forest enabling Russian planes to land ...¹⁷² Frequently, Russian paratroopers descended into the woods, and underground activities perked up under their guidance ... Sometimes, when Russian planes were expected, we made fires to show them where to drop ammunition.*¹⁷³



Figure 67: Memorial to the Partisans in the Volche Nory forest 6/2018

171 The 51st Brigade, Sara Shner-Nishmit, p.264, 266, 269, 270, 275, 305

172 The Vapor by Bryna Bar Oni, 1976, p.59

173 The Vapor by Bryna Bar Oni, 1976, p.94



Figure 68: *Partisan memorial in the Volche Nory forest, 6/2018,
(L-R) Melissa, Phyllis, Josh, Aron, Nancy, Abe, Debra, David*



Figure 69: *Russian liberator memorial near the Volche Nory forest, 6/2018*

CHAPTER VI

RED ARMY LIBERATION: WWII: JULY 1944

The Russian partisans received communication that the Russian army was advancing west towards us, but it took a long time until they reached us in July 1944. We prepared for the retreating German Army by establishing a separate camp with food further south in case we needed to retreat from the Volche Nory Forest. Our information came from our Russian partisan communication radio and from our scouts and the local farmers that lived near the forest.

A few days before the Russian army liberated us in July 1944 German planes dropped bombs in the forest and we hid in our underground bunkers and in the swamps within the forest. The bombing finally stopped, and in a few hours, we were so happy to see the arriving Red Army soldiers. The first Russian soldier I saw was a lieutenant who was sweating because it was a hot summer day. The Russian Army stayed in the forest for the next few days and we did not see any Germans soldiers again.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

On Tuesday, July 10, 1944 the general staff ordered all the partisans to gather at the edge of the forest. Red army units arrived with tanks, trucks, motorcycles and on foot.^{174,175,176}

Most of the Polish sympathizers that worked for the Germans retreated west with the German Army. One Polish man from Kossov actively worked for the Germans and his cousin was an active Partisan fighter. He was arrested in the forest and a trial occurred. My friend, Bashkie Kasofsky, testified that he was her neighbor and not only worked for the Germans but also willingly killed her ill mother in the Vatskevitch ghetto in 1942. As he was convicted and sentenced to death he cried out to his cousin “brother help me!” His cousin, a partisan, replied “You are not my brother, you are a German!” He was handed over to our Jewish group and the Jewish doctors slowly executed him.

When I entered the forest in August 1942, I had no clothing except a nightgown. The Partisans gave me a good wool coat, wool suit and boots. I used this coat for two years. I wore it and slept on it and it was falling apart by the time I was liberated in July 1944.

Of over 1,200 Jews, including infants, children and elderly Jews who were the fortunate ones to escape the “shechitas”¹⁷⁷ in the ghettos to reach the Volche Nory Forest no more than 60 or 70 (possible only 50) Jews survived to be liberated by the Red Army in July 1944. These 60 or 70 became the eyewitnesses to tell our story of our struggle and resistance, our story of deprivation, mental and physical torture, and immortality of the survivors. Luckily from my immediate family, my brother Aron, my husband Yankel and I survived.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

*Of the 370 Jews who had escaped from Byten ghetto (in 1942) only 23 now lived.*¹⁷⁸

174 The Destruction of Slonim Jewry, Alpert 359

175 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.266

176 The Vapor by Bryna Bar Oni, 1976, p.96

177 Slaughters in Yiddish

178 The Vapor by Bryna Bar Oni, 1976, p.101

A partial list of Jewish survivors that were liberation in the Volche Nory Forest in July 1944 include:

- Sara and Jakob Rosjanski (USA)
- Aron Zuchowicki-my brother (USA)
- Chaim Polansky (Polonski)-teenager-my future brother in law (Israel)
- Cina Volk (Israel)
- Nname Volk Gershenovitch and Ryvka Volk-daughters and one son of Cina Volk (Israel)
- Boria (Baruch) Judkowski (our leader) and brother Shmuel- (Israel)
- Horachansky-teenager
- Motke and Sholem Krafshuk
- Bashkie Kasofsky (remained in Pasterine (Podstariny) near Kossov)
- Henna and husband Duckson (Byten)
- Itka (Utka) Vietchovia
- Lyubia Abramovich (Minsk, Belarus)
- Avraham and Dr. Cheslawa Orlinski-cousins-Pinsk Forest (USA then Israel)

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

The Holocaust in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union was in many aspects different from other areas of Europe under German occupation. The Soviet occupied Jews were the first to be physically and almost totally exterminated. This method of mass murder required the direct and active participation of large number of Germans and tens of thousands of local collaborators, civilians and police. The local populations, contrary to other places in Europe, witnessed and where aware of the annihilation of their Jewish neighbors, which was carried out almost openly before them.

The Righteous among the nations acted in a hostile environment. They risked their lives and the lives of their families to help Jews.

*The Jewish resistance in the ghettos and the armed partisan groups in the forest were active on a much wider scale than elsewhere in Europe. In Belorussia three percent or less of the Jewish population survived the German occupation. This was the lowest in comparison with other German occupied countries. In addition, there was total disappearance of thousands of shtets, small Jewish communities.*¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.525-531

CHAPTER VII

WWII: RUSSIAN OCCUPATION BACK LINES OF THE RED ARMY: JULY TO OCTOBER 1944

The Russian soldiers that liberated us in the forest told us that we must sign up, that is register for a job with the Russian Authorities. Initially there was much confusion and I thought I would not have to register, and we could go back home. Nickolie Nickoliavitch, who was Bashke Kasofsky's boyfriend and a Russian partisan, helped us. His father and my father were friends before WWI. He told me to register for any place, anywhere, working for the Russians, otherwise we would be sent to fight on the front lines of the ongoing war. At that time my brother Aron was very ill, and I asked Nikolai, what should I do with my brother? He told me to register my brother for the same place as we would register. I told my brother, what Nikolai told me, and that I had registered all of us. He was very angry with me. He said, "what do you mean, we should go home!" Aron was very weak and dizzy at that time and just wanted to go home. I then went to two Jewish boys who were with us, who had a similar name, Horoshansky. I asked him to take our place. He initially said "yes", but later after talking to his friend, Chaim Polanski, he changed his mind and would not go in our place. We had no choice but to move to our new registered location. Chaim Polonski and his friend Horoshonsky did not register for a job and were sent to the front lines of the Russian Army fighting the Germans.

— TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY —

Operation Bagration: On June 22, 1944, the Red Army strategic offensive military operation in Soviet Byelorussia commenced and was code named 'Bagration'. The start of Operation Bagration involved many partisan formations in the Belorussian SSR, which were instructed to resume their attacks on railways and communications. From 19 June, large numbers of explosive charges were placed on rail tracks and though many were cleared, they had a significant disruptive effect. The partisans were also used to mop up encircled German forces once the breakthrough and exploitation phases of the operation were completed. Operation Bagration continued until August 19, 1944 and destroyed the German Army Group Center. The Red Army reached the Bug River on July 21, 1944.¹⁸⁰

Yankel, Aron, and I walked out of the Volche Nory Forest in July, 1944, with other Jews behind the Russian army wagons and artillery as they moved west. I soon asked our new Russian officer if my brother could ride on a horse drawn wagon because he was ill, which he did. We walked for two days and arrived in a large village called Paterosk, near Zelve. Brest was west of us on the Bug River where the Germans were fighting. When we arrived in Paterosk there were only 5 to 10 people in this large village besides the Russian soldiers. Initially we slept in the attic on straw then we found a room in a farmer's house and I worked for the farmer. In Paterosk the Russian soldiers treated us very well but the locals were fearful of the Russian soldiers. Initially my brother, Aron, was still ill, weak and dizzy, and a female Russian doctor told him that he was "low in blood" (anemic) and needed to improve his nutrition and to eat milk, butter and meat and soon Aron's health improved.

My brother, Yankel and I worked in Paterosk for the next 2 or 3 months. My brother was assigned as an assistant to a Russian lieutenant because he spoke Russian and Polish very well. This became a very good assignment. The Russian lieutenant and Aron would enter the homes of Russian and Polish individuals who worked for the Germans, German sympathizers, and they were served good meals and even vodka. The lieutenant told my brother to eat and drink and

180 The 51st Brigade, Sarah Shner-Nishmit, p.332, and Wikipedia

then we will send these German sympathizers to jail or the front lines to fight the Germans, which they did. Yankel had a mild tremor at that time but otherwise he was fine.

Yankel took shifts carrying a rifle and guarded a house that was used as a jail for German sympathizers. I set up a kitchen with the assistance of one local girl and we cooked for the Russian soldiers. The locals provided us with bread, milk, meat, vegetables and whatever we felt was necessary for the kitchen. As time moved on, more and more Russians arrived in Paterosk and they started to take over the town and the kitchen and we became concerned.

In October 1944 after we were in Paterosk for 2-3 months, 4 or 5 Jewish boys and a girl from Kossov and I decided to visit Kossov. We walked two days and nights and finally arrived in Kossov where we stayed overnight. The next morning, I left Kossov and decided to walk alone to Vatsevitsh, which took some time. As I entered Vatssevitsh I walked towards my house, 18 Rosjanski. My house was burned down, and the only thing left was the brick rubble from the fireplace. My sister Chanah's house across the street was also burned down, as were all the Jewish homes. I sat on the brick rubble and began to cry, like a little child. A Jewish neighbor from Lubishchitsy who also survived in the Volche Nory and Pinsk Forests came over to me and told me not to cry but I could not help myself. This young boy was consoling me and he himself was the only survivor from his family!

One of my sister's neighbors who lived across the street, who I knew well, came over and told me that as the Germans retreated, they burned down all the Jewish homes, stores and businesses made from wood or brick. This neighbor told me that he pleaded with the Germans not to burn down his house, for which he was thankful. He gave me food and milk and then I walked 6 km. to my parent's house in Lubishchitsy.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

Russian testimony stated that when the Germans retreated in July 1944, they burned most of the houses (Jewish) and forcibly took over 100 villagers with them.¹⁸¹

As I approached my parent's house, which I had not seen in three years, the Russian Army was packing up to leave and it was completely empty except for a large table and long bench by the wall in the large kitchen. My parent's house was large and had a stove and large oven which was used as a bakery by the Russian army. My sister Lieba's barn remained in Lubishchitsy but her house was also burned down.

Across from my parent's house was a neighbor and good friend. They were so happy to see me and welcomed me and provided me with food. I stayed overnight in their attic and they provided me with Jewish pillows and blankets that were given to them by Jews before the ghetto was established. They and the other neighbors next to my parents' home told me "Bring your brother and husband, please return, and we will help you" and they did! They promised to give us a cow and any help they can provide. My father was always good and so helpful to this neighbor who had younger children. Now they were helping us!

The next day I set out walking to Kossov and joined the Jewish boys and girls and we then walked back to Paterosk. I told my brother and Yankel what I saw and what I was told.

181 Ivatsevichi Extraordinary State Commission Report, GARF, December, 1944

CHAPTER VIII

LUBISHCHITSY – RETURNING HOME: OCTOBER 1944 TO 1946

WWII continues (October 1944)

Within a few days after I returned from Lubishchitsy I went back to Lubishchitsy with my brother. Yankel stayed behind because we were concerned about the Russian authorities, if we all left, but in reality, nobody cared. As we started walking from Paterosk we asked some Russian soldiers who were on the main road in an open truck if they could give us a ride to Lubishchitsy in exchange for vodka. Within a few hours we arrived in Lubishchitsy and my brother went door-to-door asking neighbors for vodka and he obtained a small bottle of vodka for the soldiers. Aron promised the soldiers more vodka when they returned, but they never came back. We moved into my parent's house in October 1944 that was filthy and began to clean it. My brother made beds from boards and covered them with straw to be used as mattresses. Our neighbor provided potatoes, eggs, meat, and butter and helped us reestablish our lives.

In about a week or so Yankel walked slowly and arrived in Lubishchitsy. We later were told that every able-bodied young man in Paterosk was mobilized and sent to the front lines of the Russian Army to fight the Germans. This included our Jewish friends that survived in the forest with us from Byten and Kossov. We were very fortunate to have left Paterosk, when we did.

The war was still going on and there was limited housing in Lubishchitsy, so for safety concerns we allowed another family to share my parent's home with us. When we arrived in Lubishchitsy all abled and not so-abled body men were being sent to the front lines of the Russian Army in and around Brest. To avoid being sent to the front lines of the Russian Army my brother worked at the Russian controlled sawmill in Vatskevich. He walked 6 kilometers each morning before dawn and he returned at night and was paid with "one herring and bread per day." A Russian soldier arrested Yankel and was going to send him to the front lines of the war. Yankel did have a minor tremor but could not do heavy manual labor. The soldiers noted his tremor and thought that he was just scared. I was very upset and immediately went to a high-ranking Russian officer, a lieutenant, for help and I told him that we were in the forest as Partisans fighting the Germans and my husband was ill and had a tremor. The lieutenant listened to me and assured me that he will return home very soon and Yankel was released. I invited the lieutenant to stay in our house in Lubishchitsy, which had a separate room and door. The officer slept in our house and two Russian soldiers stood guard duty each night at the officer's door. We had very limited food at that time so we could not provide him with meals.

Before we were forced into the Vatskevichi ghetto in 1942 my sisters, brother, parents and I gave neighbors in Vatskevich and Lubishchitsy clothing, household goods, furniture, sewing machine, tools and equipment, otherwise the Germans or sympathizers would have taken them. When we returned to Lubishchitsy in 1944 some of our neighbors did return some of our possessions. One of my parent's wardrobes was returned; another neighbor returned our sewing machine. Lieba's good coat was returned which I did wear. Lieba's pillows and perenes (down comforters), were not returned. In an attempt to retrieve items that were ours and not returned we went to the Russian authorities in 1944. The authorities did in fact help us get back some of our possessions including my parents couch, but it was not an easy process and required much effort and testimony.



Figure 70: *Church in Lubishchitsy, 6/2018*

The priest from the church in Lubishchitsy was very good to us and helped us. He gave us a large round table for our living room. Yankel always spoke to the priest and would even ask the priest the dates of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The priest would also take Yankel by horse drawn wagon to Kossov.

I made a coat with the sewing machine that was returned to us and I sold the coat in exchange for flour so we could bake bread. I also made us shirts and other clothing with the sewing machine. Yankel made hats by hand and in exchange, we were able to obtain food and other goods. My brother made his own alcohol still in late 1944 and he had enough grain and vegetables to produce vodka. The Russian soldiers were only interested in vodka, so we used the vodka to purchase pillows, comforters, blankets and clothing. I bought a “long down pillow” from one Russians soldier and it was special because I always held Abe on it when he was born. Otherwise there was nothing available to purchase.

One of our Russian Lubishchitsy neighbors worked for the Germans and the Russian Authorities arrested him. My brother testified in a court preceding that provided the evidence that he greatly helped us in Byten in 1942. Even though he was paid, he delivered necessary firewood and food for our family to the Byten ghetto from Vatskevitch in 1942, that allowed us to survive. His life was spared but he was sent to the front lines of the Russian Army and survived the war.

In the fall of 1944, we planted potatoes and then gathered firewood, potatoes and food in preparation for the winter of 1944-45.

WWII: Victory in Europe:¹⁸² May 1945

The war ended in May 1945 and soon afterwards a German soldier passed by my parents’ house in Lubishchitsy. He knocked on our door and asked for a “piece of bread”. He was wearing a long rotting wool Army coat. The family who was living with us at the time said to me – give him a “krank”, that is, give him nothing and kick him out!, instead I gave him some bread and he went on his way.

¹⁸² Victory in Europe – May 8 or 9, 1945



Figure 71: *Lubishchitsy in area of Abram and Razel Zuchowicki property, Abraham Ross, 6/2018*

Abe is born: September 5, 1945

My son, Abram (Abe), was born in my parents' home in Lubishchitsy on September 5, 1945 and we named him after my father, "Abram, Avraham". When I was in labor Yankel or Aron went to get the midwife to help with the delivery but by the time they returned, Abe was born – "arrived on this side of the world." We did not have any proper diapers or clothing for Abram, just a few rags and a towel we were given to swaddle him.

Sara Polonski (Polonska) Returns home: 1945

My future sister-in-law and a family friend, Sara Polonski (Polonska), was born April 3, 1920 in Kossow-Poleski (Kossov) which was very close to the village where I was born. She survived Auschwitz and Ravensbruck concentration camp and returned to Kossov in Nov. or Dec. 1945 and joined Aron, Yankel and I as our new family unit.

My mother Razel Orlinski Zuchowicki and Sara Polonski's (Polonska) mother, Faiga Polonski were best friends, as close as sisters from Kossow-Poleski from childhood. They worked together and helped each other during WWI when they were both displaced by the German Army to Lomza, Poland. I knew her entire family and cousins in Kossov and we were friends.

Sara Polonski told me the following. The German Army entered Kossow-Poleski (Kossov), Poland in June 1941 and burned down her house and they moved in with another family. A month later, the Germans established a ghetto in Kossov from July 1941 to July 1942. Her father, Mayer, and brother, Chaim, lived in one area of the ghetto and Sara and her mother and sisters lived in another part of the ghetto. Her father got permission to see them once a week. All the Jews in the ghetto had to wear a yellow "lata" (patch) in the form of a star and Sara already felt – "this was the end." A Russian prisoner who worked with her father told her father that all the Jews were going to be killed and the Germans were digging a mass grave for the Jews at the outskirts of town. Sara was urged to escape but she could not. She felt her family would be killed if she escaped. On Friday night July 28, 1942 10,000 Jews including Sara's mother, Faiga, and older sister were marched down Kosciuszko St. toward two open mass graves, open pits. The Jews were shot,

massacred, at the pits edge and Sara clearly could hear the screams and gunfire that night! Her father hid Chaim in a pile of horse manure. Later, Chaim escaped to the Russian partisan controlled Volche Nory Forest, where he found refuge with the Kossov group in 1942. During our two years in the forest we took care of Chaim, who was 16 or 17. In the ghetto her father, Meyer, came to Sara and took her and her younger sister Bluma to the basement where they hid all night. He told Sara that he would be happy if his children could survive. In the morning Sara's father ventured out and he was also shot. Those that survived that night including Sara and her sister Bluma were forced to clean out the Jewish houses, including those that were shot, for the next two weeks. Sara felt they were also going to be killed, so Sara with her younger sister, Bluma escaped from the Kossov ghetto and hid in a barn, then a hay wagon, and then walked from place to place searching for food and shelter. They tried to enter the large Volche Nory Forest in 1942 but were blocked by the Russian partisan's due to overcrowding as more and more survivors arrived. Sara and her sister Bluma moved on and entered the Pruzana ghetto in 1942. In late December 1942, the Germans put them into a cattle car and transported them by rail (Lonowo station¹⁸³) to Auschwitz II- Birkenau concentration camp. Bluma was separated from Sara and was killed in Auschwitz during the selection process with so, so many other Jewish children. Sara was tattooed prisoner number 33076 on her left lower arm with an upside-down triangle under the number.



Figure 72: Sara Polonski Zuchowicki tattoo from Auschwitz

—**ACCORDING TO AUSCHWITZ AND INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE (ITS) DOCUMENTS**—

*A sealed wagon on train #PJ99 went from Pruzana and Volkovysk ghetto to Oranczyc near Bialystock, Poland with 2,612 Jews including 518 children up to 10 years of age. They arrived on Jan 29, 1943 and 2,010 of the Jews were killed in Auschwitz including the 518 children.*¹⁸⁴

Life or more accurately staying alive was very difficult in Auschwitz II- Birkenau. Sara told me she worked outside doing hard labor moving rocks. She remembered smelling the odor of burning human flesh all the time. Guards rationed minimal amounts of coffee, water, soup and bread to the point that they were becoming skeletons. In less than one-year Sara became ill with diarrhea and was too weak to work. When she was so ill, she laid on her wood bunk with dead people near her at times. One day in September 1943, the women barracks chief forced her to get up and carry a bucket of human waste to the latrine. That woman saved her life by giving her boiled water and she started to get better. She later worked tearing off leather from shoe soles, even baby shoes, of the Jews that did not survive. Each shoe represented a Jewish victim.

¹⁸³ The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, Yitzhak Arad, p.260

¹⁸⁴ Auschwitz documents

As the Russian Army was approaching in January 1945, she heard bombardment and one morning they were awakened and were chased outside of the barracks in bare feet. She thought she was going to be killed but instead they were packed into cattle cars and transported from Auschwitz to Ravensbruck concentration camp (*January 18 or 23, 1945*). In Ravensbruck Sara was assigned prisoner number 101739.¹⁸⁵ From Ravensbruck Sara was liberated and transported by the Swedish Red Cross buses (*White buses or train to Denmark, then to Doverstop*) to Sweden (*and identified as #258*) with a group of Jewish girls (*She arrived on the evening of April 28, 1945; passenger list*).¹⁸⁶

(Ravensbruck was liberated by the advancing Russian Army in April 29-30, 1945.)

By the time Sara arrived in Sweden, Sara was malnourished, cachectic, weighting 70 pounds, and recovered in a Swedish hospital.

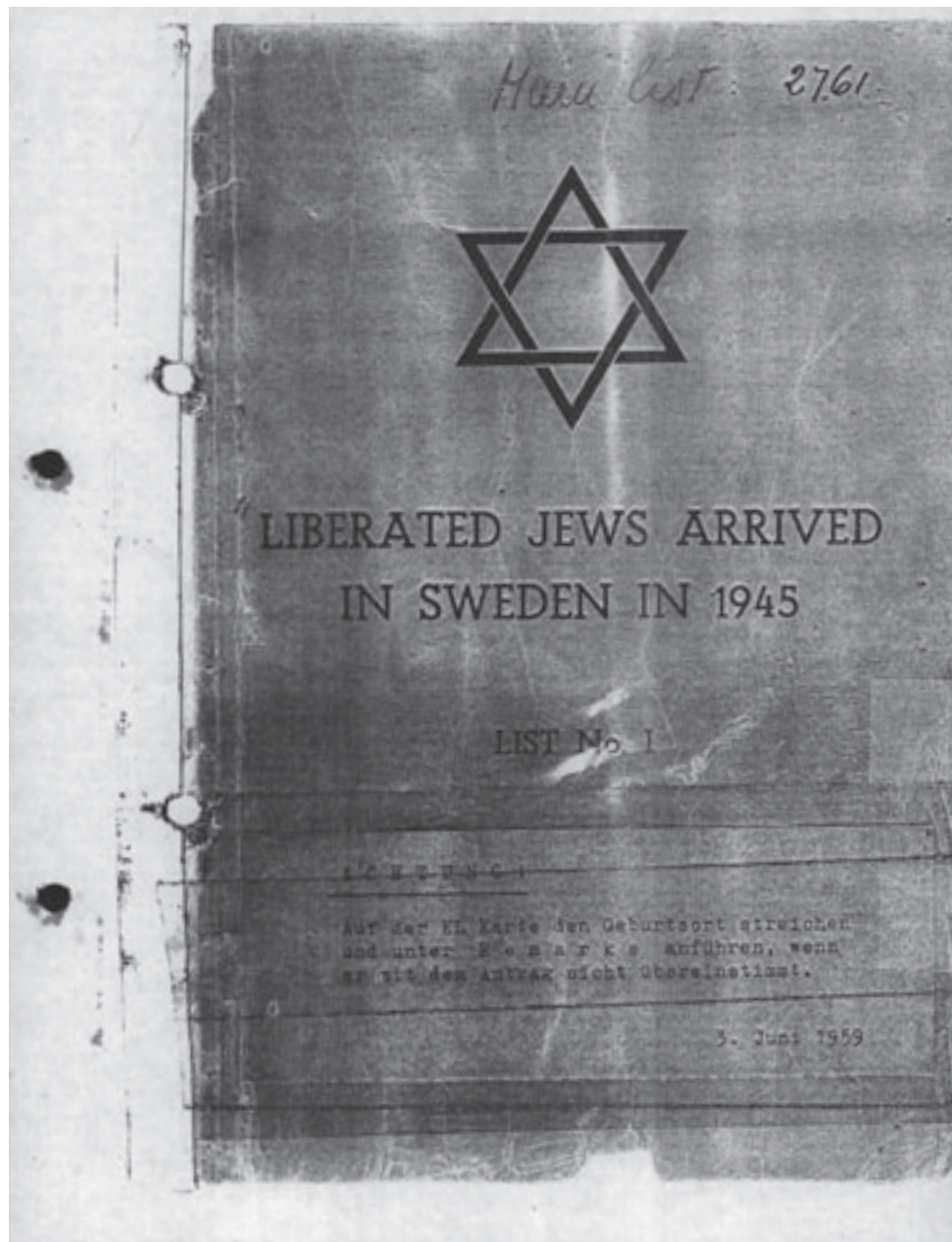


Figure 73: ITS-Liberated Jew Arrived in Sweden in 1945, Sara Polonski

185 International Tracing Service (ITS) file 3764800

186 International Tracing Service (ITS) file 78772591-2 (Sharit ha-platah)

5461

221. Mosskowitz	Bronisława	1.5.1922	Lodz
222. Mosskowitz	Mira	1.4.1925	"
223. Bilaka	Zofia	8.4.1913	Szarnotuly
224. Bilaka	Greta	1.7.1920	Krabia
225. Bilaka	Lena	12.6.1924	"
226. Landau	Fela	1.1.1920	Kielce
227. Strykowska	Bronia	25.12.1917	Zdunska Wola
228. Zamel	Chana	25.3.1923	Lodz
229. Bigelajzen	Fema	3.10.1925	Lask
230. Bigelajzen	Chaja	7.12.1927	"
231. Hamel	Malka	20.3.1914	Biala Rawska
232. Traube	Masza	6.8.1918	Lodz
233. Potocka	Estera	14.7.1910	Strykow
234. Zielowa	Gitta	16.4.1917	Lodz
235. Grynholc-Cwern	Genia	9.3.1919	Pabianice
236. Jelen	Edzia	20.9.1921	Lask
237. Jelen	Chawa	1.8.1925	"
238. Mosskowitz	Zosia	20.7.1925	"
239. Goldmann	Henryka	2.7.1915	Sosnowice
240. Rozenman	Rozs	15.12.1907	Radom
241. Wajcman Diamant	Sara	14.1.10	"
242. Janowska	Jadzia	4.11.1923	Rawa Mazowiecka
243. Janowska	Zosia	15.11.1920	"
244. Kamrat	Basia	17.7.1924	Jedrzegow
245. Kamrat	Hadaas	12.5.1922	"
246. Lewi	Sala	26.9.1924	Rawa Mazowiecka
247. Lewi	Cesia	15.6.1920	Ujazd
248. Mleczak	Zofia	17.9.1920	Wochyn
249. Deb	Fela	18.1.1922	Chaczanka
250. Nitka	Guta	19.9.1924	Warzawa
251. Welner	Chaja	4.4.1923	Bedzin
252. Majranowska	Chana	30.4.1923	"
253. Kaplan	Minia	10.10.1921	Mniejon
254. Bergman	Michla	18.6.1923	Dobryzn
255. Herman	Halina	15.3.1926	Mlawa
256. Jakubowicz	Chana	15.3.1924	Lodz
257. Edelsberg	Pola	1923	Opole
258. Polonska	Sara	3.4.1924	Koson Poleski
259. Szwarobard-Satern	Estera	25.9.1910	Lodz
260. Potass Solewicz	Leokadia	18.12.1916	Sosnowiec
261. Grün	Maria	11.8.1917	Radom
262. Solewicz Altman	Regina	15.5.1923	Sosnowiec
263. Jakubowicz	Frenja	10.8.1910	"
264. Brunbaum	Andzia	17.5.1918	Radom
265. Bielak	Cypa	28.6.1920	Suchowola
266. Dancygier	Eugenia	30.10.1918	Radom
267. Fiszman	Ruchla	5.2.1913	"
268. Seifman	Regina	23.1.1918	"
269. Birenbaum	Dora	6.2.1919	"
270. Goldberg	Fajga	9.9.1906	Kurwenki
271. Tom	Wanda	9.4.1915	Lwow
272. Frydman	Felicja	13.6.1926	Radom
273. Senator	Fryderyka	27.5.1931	"
274. Morgen	Nacha	25.5.1919	Sandomierz
275. Borensstein	Genia	5.12.1916	Radom

68

Figure 74: ITS- Sara Polonska (Polonski) # 258

am 23. 1. 1945					
Überstellung Nr. 42 vom Aussch. - ohne Listen					
Latyskova, Maria- 69144	19. Jahre	polit	101.727	Russin	
Kostenko, Ignat- 35629	25. Jahre	polit	101.728	Russin	
Nachumova, Helena- 26586	28. Jahre	polit	101.729	Russin	
Schpassel, Maria- 81285	5. 7.25	polit	101.730	Jugosl/Jüd.	
Schpasser, Anna- 81282	31. 8.22	polit	101.731	Jugosl/Jüd.	
Mossach, Ernst- 61008	23. 7.27	polit	101.732	Ungar/Jüd.	
Schäbberger, Maria- 81201	11. 5.21	polit	101.733	Jugosl/Jüd.	
Gärtner, Anna- 17532	27. 6.14	polit	101.734	Polin/Jüd.	
Berger, Magda- 15945	19. 9.22	polit	101.735	Ungar/Jüd.	
Berger, Julia- 15946	22. 1. 894	polit	101.736	Ungar/Jüd.	
Berger, Edith- 15947	5. 5.24	polit	101.737	Ungar/Jüd.	
Scharf, Bösch- 5781	19. 9.30	polit	101.738	Ungar/Jüd.	
Polonska, Maria- 33076	3. 4.24	polit	101.739	Polin/Jüd.	
Bomchel, Janka- 33937	8. 6.23	polit	101.740	Polin/Jüd.	
Bomchel, Sara- 33936	12. 6.25	polit	101.741	Polin/Jüd.	
Kromasova, Lela- 53628	2. 7.23	polit	101.742	Polin/Jüd.	
Weber, Lena- 72809	14. 10.20	polit	101.743	Tschechin/Jüd.	
Schpakowska, Maria- 79700	13. Jahre	polit	101.744	Russin	
Wroeschkine, Maria- 79694	21. Jahre	polit	101.745	Russin	
Schpakowska, Olga- 79699	20. Jahre	polit	101.746	Russin	
Chascharenko, Elena- 81568	28. Jahre	polit	101.747	Russin	
Gabrowska, Janka- 82339	20. Jahre	polit	101.748	Russin	
Kaba, Manka- 27474	3. 3.19	polit	101.749	Polin/Jüd.	
Gawicka, Iofa- 38375	15. 9.18	polit	101.750	Polin	
Misiogowska, Bronislaw- 36322	12. 8.08	polit	101.751	Polin	
Jankowska, Trena- 22524	1. 8.24	polit	101.752	Polin	
Ireclier, Maria- 26306	20. 6.18	polit	101.753	Polin/Jüd.	
Wierabicka, Bronislaw- 34672	10. 12.18	polit	101.754	Polin	
Pysach, Rysa- 75155	26. Jahre	polit	101.755	Franz/Jüd.	
Reichert, Nifreda- 665	7. 10.05	asozial	101.756	D.R.	
Pitracz, Wladyslaw- 54818	12. 11.23	polit	101.757	Polin	
Tatars, Wila- 7583	29. Jahre	polit	101.758	Polin	
Altman, Genia- 49282	6. 6.19	polit	101.759	Polin/Jüd.	
Herachkova, Ella- 49442	7. 12.27	polit	101.760	Polin/Jüd.	
Krawicka, Estera- 47890	5. 7.19	polit	101.761	Polin/Jüd.	
Krawicka, Maria- 47891	5. 8.27	polit	101.762	Polin/Jüd.	

Figure 75: ITS-Sara Polonska (Polonski), Auschwitz # 33076

In Nov. or Dec. 1945 Sara was transported to Moscow, Russia then to her hometown of Kossov. On her way from Moscow to Kossov by train her only suitcase was cut open and clothing was stolen, and she was left with a sweater and her coat. She arrived in her hometown of Kossov in November or December 1945. On one of Yankel's trips to Kossov, by horse and wagon, with the local Priest from Lubishchitsy, he met Sara Polonski. Yankel told Sara that her brother Chaim Polonski survived the war and she should come back to Lubishchitsy, with him and the Priest, which she did. We welcomed Sara and since she had no clothes and was the same size as me, very thin, I gave her my skirt. It was the only extra piece of clothing I had at the time which I bought from a Russian soldier for vodka. From this point on, the four of us became inseparable and Sara stayed with us as our new family unit and we were like sisters. Sara married my brother Aron who she knew very well before the war. Sara helped care for Abram (Abe) as if he was her own son.

Chaim Polonski, Sara's brother, served in the Russian army after our liberation in the Volche Nory Forest. Chaim shot the tip of his finger off while he was in the Russian Army and was hospitalized. At the end of the war Chaim escaped from the Russian Army and he stayed with us in Linz, Austria for a few weeks. He went to Bialystock as part of a young Kibbutz group then immigrated to Israel in or about 1947.

Leaving Lubishchitsy, Russia: Spring 1946

Since Sara Polonski survived Auschwitz and was tattooed, 33076, she became a suspect by the Russian authorities that occupied the area. They questioned her "how did you survive and were you working for the Germans?" so she was required to register each week with the Russian authorities in Vatsevitsch. Yankel heard from returning Russian soldiers that Jews were being helped by America in Poland! Yankel and Sara felt, very strongly, we needed to leave and move west to Poland. I felt, Lubishchitsy was my home and I did not want to leave. We had suffered for so many years and Abram (Abe) was an infant and we were finally in our home and comfortable. We finally did make the very difficult decision to leave our home of generations and travel west to Poland and the unknown and hopefully immigrate to Palestine.

In the spring of 1946, we began to prepare for our move, but we did not want to tell any neighbors. We were able to sell my sister Lieba's barn and silo in Lubishchitsy to our neighbor, which was taken down and moved, in exchange for a cow. We also sold my parents barn in Lubishchitsy for 10 or 15 Dollars. One lady offered us a diamond for one of our cows, but we did not take it because we were uncertain of its value. We did sell one cow for gold Russian rubles. Unfortunately, the locals came to notice that we were selling things in preparation to leave and at that point we were no longer able to sell my parent's house. In fact, the person who purchased my sister's barn and silo was so very angry and upset, she screamed at us, because she had already paid us: otherwise they would have taken the barn and silo when we would have left and not have to pay us.

In 1946 we strongly encouraged and pleaded with my very close girl friend and Sara's cousin, Bashkie Kasofsky, to leave with us! Baskie lived in the village of Podstariny, which was near Kossov, and there were no more Jews living there after the war. Baskie was in love with her Russian boyfriend Nickolie and she would not leave him and wanted to marry him. I doubt if she ever married Nicholie because his mother was against it. We planted potatoes in our garden in Lubishchitsy before we left in the spring of 1946 and we told Bashkie to harvest the potatoes.

Yankel and Sara traveled by train to Baranovichy to obtain permits and purchase tickets for the "last freight train" going west to Poland. If we had made the decision earlier to travel to Poland, we could have traveled at no cost. The Russian government allowed Jews to return to their homes in Poland. We had no idea how long it would take and where we would end up, although we knew we wanted to travel to the western part of Poland. Even though Vatsevitsh had a train station we needed to leave from Bereza Kartuska. Aron, with the assistance of a farmer, traveled by horse and wagon with our worldly goods for over three hours to the Bereza Kartuska train station.

When we arrived at the train station in Bereza Kartuska the Russian authorities noticed Sara's tattoo and another Polish family who needed to register with the Russian authorities each week. Sara and the other individuals were taken away by car to Vatssevitsh and placed in Jail! Yankel followed Sara by train to Vatssevitsh in order to help release Sara from jail. There were no seats available on the train, so he held on to the train door platform on the way to Vatssevitsh. Aron

was still traveling to Bereza Kartuska train station with our furniture and supplies and was not aware of the situation. Yankel and I knew one of the Russian officers who previously had stayed in our home in Lubishchitsy. Yankel spoke to the Russian officer in Vatsvitsh and he assured Yankel that Sara would be released because he had ultimate authority in Vatsvitsh. In the morning Sara was released from jail and they ran and took the train back to Bereza Kartuska.

All of our worldly items were loaded onto a freight train at Bereza Kartuska. On the freight train we took our wagon, horse and even one cow so Abe would have milk. We also took many sacks of rye grain so we could bake bread whenever we would stop. We also took my parent's couch that Abe slept on, pillows, blankets, household goods and our clothing. With us on the same freight train were other Jews; Boria Judkowski, Cina Volk and her two daughters', Ryvka Volk, and Nham Volk Gershenovitch. Cina's son with his wife went ahead of us from Byten.

We traveled west to Brest then thru Poland to Lodz then to Breslau (Wroclaw), Poland, which took many days (? 2 or more weeks). Boria Judkowski got off in Lodz. Each day Abe had milk from the cow, along the way, and he slept on my parent's sofa. We took food and grain with us and we would stop along the way to cook meals in "Kibbutz's" (Jewish rest stops) in Poland. We paid at each stop, "it was a business." We were not sure where we would end up, but we were sure we did not want to stay in Poland and wanted to move further west.



Figure 76: Belarus after WWII



Figure 77: Poland after WWII

— TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY —

Out of the 3.25 million Jews who lived in Poland on the eve of World War II, only about 380,000 had survived. Roughly 70% of these Jews had fled Poland primarily to the Soviet Union, either before the war had broken out or during the initial months of German occupation when Poland was split up by the Ribbentrop– Molotov agreement. Approximately 20% were liberated from concentration camps, forced labor camps and death camps while the remaining 10% had been able to make it by assuming non-Jewish identities in hiding among Poles or as partisan fighters or family camps. Estimates of the number of Jews in Poland after the end of World War II ranged between 55,000 in June 1945 and 80,000 in August 1945.¹⁸⁷

On July 5, 1945, the Soviet government allowed former Polish citizens, who could prove their status, to return to Poland. A main condition was to leave all property in the USSR. They could take only a small amount of money and personnel items.¹⁸⁸

The mass departure of approximately 280,000 Jews (exercised their right to return to Poland) by land and sea from the Soviet bloc countries could have only occurred with the knowledge and consent of Moscow.¹⁸⁹

... freight trains to Poland ... from Byten ... The trip took two weeks (to Warsaw, Lodz) ... At each station we got off ... we also gathered fire wood to cook a hot meal – usually potatoes or barley soup. Active in Lodz at the time was the Bricha (the underground organized effort that helped Jewish Holocaust survivors escape post–World War II).¹⁹⁰

187 Post Holocaust politics, p.160, Kochavi

188 Jewish Heritage Research Group in Belarus, May 16, 2016

189 Post Holocaust politics, p.227, Kochavi

190 The Vapor by Bryn Bar Oni, 1976, p.109-111

CHAPTER IX

BRESLAU, POLAND (WROCLAW): SPRING TO SUMMER 1946

We arrived in Breslau, Poland near the western border of Poland in the spring of 1946. Breslau was a large city and we could not keep our wagon, cow and horse so we sold them at the railway station to a Jewish man. It was a business for these Jews, and we had no choice but to sell these items and were paid very, very little, a few Zlotys. The five of us stayed in Breslau for the next three or four months in a large apartment that we paid for. The apartment was dirty and I cleaned it for days before we moved in. We received very little assistance, like a bar of soap, from the Jewish aid agency, I believe the aid agency was the “Joint” (Joint Distribution Committee – JDC). We had some money and bought what we needed.



Figure 78: Poland-Czech Republic-Austria after WWII

Crossing the Borders: July 1946

In July 1946, we wanted to travel to the American zone in Austria then Palestine. From Breslau, Poland “we paid” for a Jewish group to take us. We walked a long way west to the Czechoslovakian border where we stayed one night then took a dirty coal freight train thru Czechoslovakia and walked more to reach the Austrian-Czechoslovakia border.

At the Czechoslovakia-Austrian border our group was told by our Jewish leader not to take anything, that is leave “everything” – “all our possessions at the border in order to cross without suspicion!!” We were told that if the

authorities thought we were escaping by crossing the border they would kill us. We left all our possessions in the “Kibbutz” on the border before we crossed, and they made a lot of money from our possessions!! I left my good winter boots, household goods, and clothing and even my favorite beautiful down pillow that Abe slept on. I purchased this pillow from a Russian soldier in Lubishchitsy after the war in exchange for vodka. I hated to leave it behind because Abe would sleep on the pillow and I would hold Abe on this pillow at all times in my arms. The pillow was very special to me and I kept thinking about it, even today. It took about two weeks to travel by foot and train and we stayed at Kibbutz’s along the way until we arrived in the American zone in Austria.

If we had waited a little longer, four to six weeks, in Breslau, Poland, we could have crossed the borders from Breslau, Poland thru Czechoslovakia to the American zone in Linz, Austria at no cost (Brichah would pay) and we would not have had to give up our possessions.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER’S TESTIMONY** —

In a meeting at the end of February 1946 (USA) Gen. Mark Clark had no intention of preventing the movement of Jews from Poland to Austria especially since the force of 13,000 soldiers at his disposal was not sufficient to do so effectively. On March 21, 1946, the official policy from the war and state department was not to close the borders. President Truman had favorable policies towards DPs (Displaced Persons) generally and towards Jewish DPs in particular. In 1946 the number of Jews leaving Eastern Europe increased. On July 4, 1946, a Jewish pogrom (mob attack) occurred where 42 Jews were murdered by a mob in Kielce, Poland. This became the turning point in the Polish governments policy on Jewish emigration, which allowed Jews to leave Poland without a visa or exit permit. Before the pogrom, about 70 Jews have been leaving each week, after the pogrom at least 700 people per day were fleeing Poland and approximately another 70,000 were expected to follow.

Greatly concerned by the recent large influx of Jews but at the same time well aware of the electoral importance of the presidential elections in the US, the secretary of war and state summoned American Jewish leaders on July 22, 1946. They asked the Jewish leaders for their help to decrease the movement of Jews by lowering the number of incoming Jews from Poland and Czechoslovakia to 10,000 per month. The Jewish leaders strongly opposed sealing the border and not granting infiltrators the status of DPs. The Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) was asked to help reduce the exit from Poland and the JDC was quick to explain that it had no connection with organizing the movement and all it did was to provide food and clothing. The Joint Distribution Committee did not want to be named and linked with illegal activity. A decision to leave the borders of the American occupation zone open was in large measure the result of intense pressure exerted by the Jewish lobby in Washington.¹⁹¹

Brichah, a Hebrew word meaning flight, and the name of an underground organization that coordinated this flight began moving the refugees to camps in the American Zone in Germany and Austrian with American military authorities turning a blind eye.¹⁹² Abba Kovner, one of the underground commanders of the Vilna ghetto and founder and organizer of the Brichah movement, found the Polish people – no matter what their walk of life – we’re uniting in one thing, the desire to get rid of Jews.¹⁹³

Jewish exodus from Poland thru Czechoslovakia occurred without documents and without passports. Jews crossed into the American zone in Austria and Germany by way of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovakian government helped and allowed the Jews to across but they did not want the Jews to remain in Czechoslovakia. The Brichah paid (We paid for our passage in July 1946!) for railroad tickets across Czechoslovakia from Poland to Austria and Germany, to the American zone. Between July 1 and August 8, 1946 approximately 32,000 Jews crossed Czechoslovakia from Poland. The Red Army allowed about 600 Jews per day into Austria.¹⁹⁴

191 Post holocaust politics, p.138-141, Kochavi

192 Post Holocaust politics, p.144, Kochavi

193 Post Holocaust politics, p.160, Kochavi

194 Post Holocaust politics, p.170, Kochavi

Assembly and transient points were established at the frontier with Czechoslovakia, and on July 30, 1946 the Polish border was open to all Jews wishing to leave. Although the agreement spoke of duration of 1 to 2 months, in practice, the border remained open until February 1947.¹⁹⁵

During the first three months beginning in July 1946, more than 66,000 people left; in August 1946 alone about 35,000 Jews departed. What mainly concerned the Czech government, apart for making sure none of the refugees would stay, was reimbursement of food, heat and transport it provided. Organizers of the Brichah feared that if money were not paid for the railroad tickets to transport the fleeing Jews from one side of the country to the other, the Czech government my change its policy. The Red Army allowed the entrance into Austria.¹⁹⁶

195 Post Holocaust politics, p.175, Kovchavi

196 Post Holocaust politics, p.176, Kovchavi



Figure 79: Displaced Persons – Occupation Zones in Austria and Germany 1946⁹⁷

CHAPTER X

LINZ, AUSTRIA – AMERICAN ZONE: 1946 TO 1951 DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP (DP)

Displaced Persons Camp (DP): Lager Wegscheid: July 1946 to October 1947

In July, 1946, we arrived in the American Zone in Linz, Austria and were assigned to Displaced Persons Camp (DP), Lager¹⁹⁸ Wegscheid, (“Maurice L. Taylor”, UNRRA Team 337).¹⁹⁹ We were provided housing in an old abandoned wooden army barracks. The building was open and terrible! It had no doors, windows, plumbing, heat or insulation!



Figure 80: *July 1946 Lager Wegscheid, Linz Austria, (L to R) Sara and Aron Zuchowicki, Abram, Jacob and Sara Rosjanski (first photo after the Shoah)*

¹⁹⁸ Camp

¹⁹⁹ United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) Teams



Figure 81: *Linz, Wegscheid Canteen*²⁰⁰

We shared this building with 10 to 20 families, and it was very crowded. We had old wooden plank army bunk beds with no mattresses. For mattresses, we picked grass and straw from outside of the barracks and placed them on the wooden plank bunk beds and covered them with Army blankets that were given to us on the second day. We had no pillows or clothing other than what we were wearing since we left all of our possessions at the border. We were given minimal provisions like soap and army blankets by the American administration. We had money and wanted to buy clothing and household goods but there was nothing to buy early on in Wegscheid.

As winter was approaching in 1946 my brother Aron made a small oven out of “zest” (tin) in the center of the open barracks for heat. We covered the window openings and made a door. The winter of 1946-47 was unusually cold and bitter and the wood and coal was rationed and inadequate to heat the barracks. You could feel the wind blow through the walls! We used a small amount of wood pieces (kindling) to start the coal fire. Even the Austrians told us that they never remembered such a cold and harsh winter. The winter of 1946-47 in Wegscheid was as bad and as cold as when we were in the forest! In the forest, at least we had enough wood to keep the fire going, although in Austria we were not concerned about being killed.

The stove was round and had a flat top so we could cook on it. We had coffee and some bread, but food was very limited and rationed at subsistence levels. Since we had no plumbing, we brought in water from a communal water pump area outside. During winter the area around the water pump was frozen solid and very slippery and we would carefully have to take buckets of water back to the barracks. It was so bad that some refugees were moved to German DP camps where the conditions were better. Yankel was in the hospital at that time so we were not able to move to Germany. Abe was 1 year old and began to walk. One day that winter Abe began to run and burned his left hand on the stove. I took him to the DP Hospital, and it took a long time for his hand to heal. I worked in the central kitchen as a cook. Dr. Chefarzt and Dr. Samler at the hospital in Camp Taylor, Wegscheid, evaluated Yankel in December 1947 and certified him disabled but he still was able to work.

²⁰⁰ dpcamps.org



Figure 82: Jacob Rosjanski disability certificate, Camp Taylor, Wegscheid Linz Austria 12/5/1947

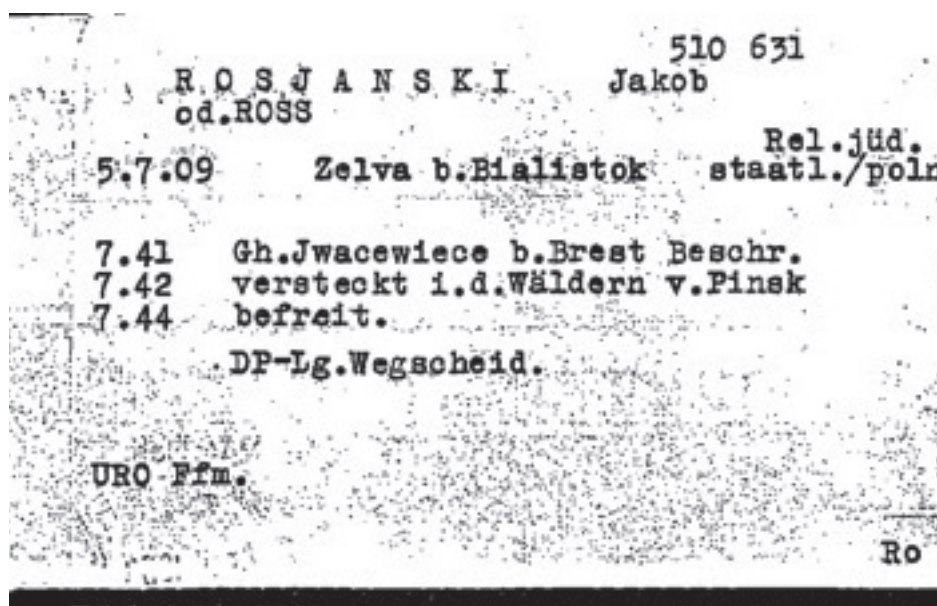


Figure 83: Jakob Rosjanski DP identification card

554 161

R O S J A N S K I Sara
od.ROSS geb.ZUCHOWICKI

15.5.13 Kosow Rel.jüd.
stl/poln.

7.41 Gh. Jwacewiece
7.42 Wald ausserh.v. Jwacewiece
7.44 befr.

DPL Wegscheid, Linz

URO Ffm. ig

Figure 84: Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski DP identification card

F - R E F

Name : ROSIANSKI Vorname ABRAHAM

Geb.-Datum : 1945

siehe T/D- 554 161

Name : R. - Vorname : SARAH

Geb.-Datum : 1913

Figure 85: Abram Rosjanski DP identification card

Z U C H O W I C K I Aron 846 193

Abraham & Rosa Crlinski jüd.

5.6.10 Kossow usa.

25.6.41 Kossow verh. u. Gh.
8.42 Flucht u. illeg.
12.44 befr.

12.44 Breslau
7.45 DPL Linz-Ebelsberg/Österr.
2.50 n. New York n.S. Gen. McRay

BA f. Wg. Trier B8

Figure 86: Aron Zuchowicki DP identification card

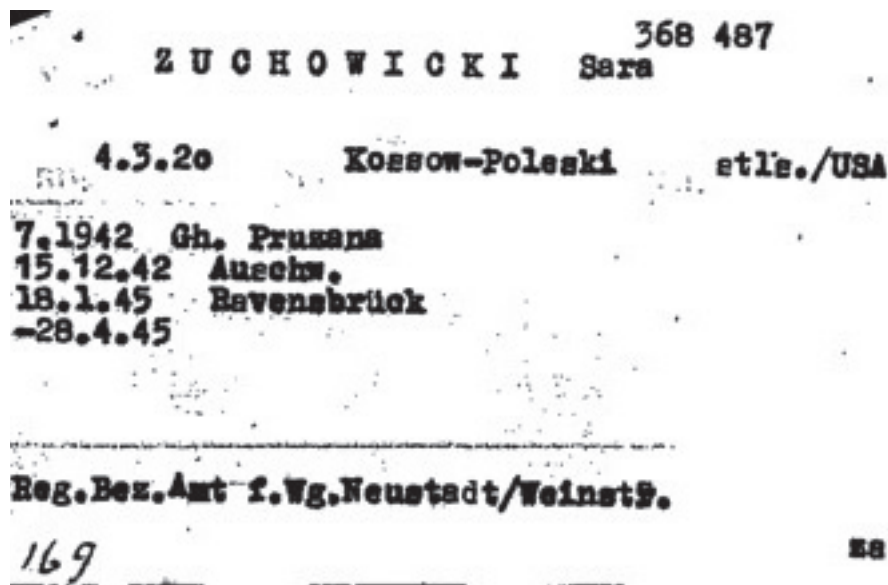


Figure 87: Sara Polonski Zuchowicki DP identification card

— TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY —

DP camp Wegscheid was a large transit refugee camp that opened in June 1946. It was the largest Jewish transit camp in Austria and housed about 3000 to 4000 inhabitants, who were meant to stay there for a short period of time before moving on. The majority of DPs came from Poland and Romania. Wegscheid was seriously overcrowded and did not have anywhere near enough living space. There were also problems with inadequate food and supplies. The living conditions were very bad and there were constant severe conflicts between the Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants. There was a semblance of community life, a small hospital and a kindergarten within the DP camp. In the end of 1947 ORT started operating in Wegscheid.²⁰¹

—CHANUKAH STORY BY MAXWELL KAUFMAN— (CONDITIONS OF CAMP WEGSCHEID 1947)

My story is about children in a D.P. Camp, in the town of Linz, Austria. The year is 1947, and we (Maxwell and Julia Kaufman, American Joint Distribution Committee, JDC) had been in Linz about one year. Julia had somehow fixed up a home for us in one of the requisitioned workers apartments. It was bitter cold that year and the camp occupants suffered cruelly because of lack of fuel. Camp Wegscheid was one of the worst. Inhabited by about 6,000 souls, the camp consisted of wooden barracks, through which the wind and snow blew, as if there were no walls, windows or doors. We were worried not only because of lack of fuel, but also on account of the sudden increase of respiratory diseases. Ill clothed and not too well fed (there was a serious shortage of fats and oils) the Jews were susceptible to anything. ... for this Chanukah celebration in a D.P. camp. Camp Wegscheid was composed of approximately 2400 women, 2000 men and 1600 children. About 900 children were of school age. The teachers of the School were themselves Displaced Persons who worked under the guidance of Jewish Agency workers. With the approach of Chanukah, the teachers came to me and presented their problems. After a long discussion regarding the difficulties, we came to the following agreement: I would supply them with fruit, candy, nuts, etc. I would also make a special distribution of clothing for the children. The prospect of supplying candies, cookies and fruits for 900 children would phase anyone, but fortunately Christmas was also near, and the U.S. Army came to the rescue with the assistance of the Jewish Army Chaplain. Clothing was a tougher problem, but after ransacking our warehouses, we managed to find enough for even costumes. These consisted of old rags, used sugar bags and anything that could be sewn and patched together by the parents and teachers. For most of the children, it was their first Chanukah; others had not the opportunity of celebrating because they were hidden away or else were on the move, fleeing from other unhappy lands. The night of Chanukah, we entered the large wooden barracks,

201 DP camps, ORT

which served as an auditorium, with other invited guests from the army. The sight that met our eyes made them moist. It was incredible. This ugly building had been transformed into a place of gaiety and warmth that would have compared favorably with anything done in the U.S.A. Old packing cases were used to build stalls; the curtain was sewn together from blankets. Ingenious use was made of cardboard boxes for toys, etc. Here and there a label stamped "Shipped by the American Joint Distribution Committee for Relief" was visible. Then the play began. In short episodes the story of Chanukah was told. Sometimes we felt sad, at other times we were thrilled. Costumes came apart, bits of scenery fell down but these wonderful children carried on like seasoned troupers. The boy who took the part of an Arab had trouble with his turban (an old flour sack); the girls sometimes tripped over their long sheets or lost a veil. It was, however, a performance we shall never forget. There was singing and dancing by groups of children of all ages. They had learned the songs and dances of Eretz well. Why should anyone be surprised? – They expected to be there soon. They didn't want to be strangers in their own land. So they sang the Chanukah songs and danced the new folk dances of their future country. We were very proud of them. Israel need have no fear for the future with material like this. We gave out special prizes for the best costumes. The first prize was a suit for a boy. A new suit just from America! The other prizes were valuable too – chocolate bars, candy, dresses, skirts, etc. Most of these articles we had personally received from friends in the States. We left the Camp about 1 a.m. and made our way in our jeep through a blinding snowstorm. Winters with the problems of fuel, warm clothing to go around, delayed shipments of essential foods and increased illness, always placed a heavy burden on the relief workers. The spirit evinced that night showed us the courage of a people who were determined to overcome all obstacles in order to achieve their purpose. They were tough – tough enough to have come through the fires of Hell and survive, in spite of incredible hardship and dangers. Next year they would sing and dance and celebrate Chanukah in their own country. Happy Chanukah. 202

Displaced Persons Camp (DP): Lager Ebelsberg: October 1947 to October 1950



Figure 88: DP Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria (USHMM archives)²⁰³

In October 1947, we were moved to the more permanent Lager (Camp) Ebelsberg, Block IV/135, in Linz Austria. The building was of brick construction and it was much nicer than Camp Wegscheid. The large brick buildings had

202 Maxwell Kaufman, Letters to the editor, Southwestern Jewish Press, 1947

203 USHMM archives

electricity, plumbing, including showers and was very warm in winter. There was a large kitchen in the basement in which we could cook and bake. We were provided food, milk, soup, or we could buy and cook whatever we wanted in the downstairs kitchen.



Figure 89: 1947 DP Camp Wegscheid/Ebelsberg, Linz Austria, (L)-Aron and Sara Zuchowicki, (R) Jacob, Sara and Abram Rosjanski



Figure 90: 1947/48 Abram Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsbeg, Linz Austria (Jacob Rosjanski made the hat)



Figure 91: 1947/48 Abram Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria (Jacob Rosjanski made the hat)



Figure 92: 1947/48 Sara and Abram Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria



Figure 93: 1947/48 Sara, Jacob and Abram Rosjanski, DP
Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria



Figure 94: 1947/48 Sara, Jacob and Abram Rosjanski, DP
Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria



Figure 95: 1948 (L) Aron and Sara Zuchowicki, (R) Jacob and Sara Rosjanski, (C) Abram Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria

From the end of World War II, Yankel, Aron, Sara and I lived and worked together as one family and we had two rooms in Camp Ebelsberg. I worked sewing pajamas and dresses and I was paid with cigarettes, not money. We sold the cigarettes and purchased whatever we needed. Even though Yankel was diagnosed as having a severe form of Parkinson's disease from post Typhus Encephalitis and had a mild tremor, he cared for Abram when I worked. My sister in law, Sara, took classes at ORT and received a certificate in sewing but did not otherwise work. She also helped take care of Abram and on one walk when Abram was two years old, he grabbed an apple in the market and the pile of apples fell and she quickly left as she apologized. My brother Aron and Yankel, who assisted him, started a business making large wooden trunks, crates, from wood boards. Displaced persons purchased these wood trunks to ship their possessions when they immigrated to the United States, Israel and other countries. My brother Aron also made an alcohol still to produce and sell vodka from any available vegetables like carrots or potatoes.

In Lager Ebelsberg we lived near Yankel's distant cousin, Gellman from Zelva. They had three children. The youngest was Mashe, who was Abram's age and they played together. My son Aron was born on July 27, 1948 in the DP Camp hospital in Linz, Austria and was named after Yankel's father, Aron. Aron and Sara had a baby girl, named Fagyl (Feiga) (Phyllis in the USA), on May 6, 1949, in the DP camp hospital in Linz, Austria and she was named after Sara's mother, Feiga.

Geburtsurkunde

(Standesamt L i n z a. d. D o n a u -----Nr. 2799/1948

A r o n R o s j a n s k i -----

ist am 27. J u l i 1948 -----

in L i n z a. d. D o n a u, Niedernhart, General Hospital 397 H -- geboren.

Vater: Mützenmacher Jakob R o s j a n s k i, israelitisch,
wohnhaft in L i n z a. d. D o n a u. -----

Mutter: Sara R o s j a n s k i, geborene S z u c h o w i c
k a, israelitisch, wohnhaft in L i n z a. d. D o n a u --

Änderungen der Eintragung: -----



L i n z a. d. D o n a u , den 5. August 1948

Der Standesbeamte

In Vertretung: 

(Zimmerbauer)

Protonenr. 23 - Geburtsurkunde (eheliche Geburt) S. 1 - Nr. 8 109

Figure 96: Aron Rosjanski birth certificate, Linz Austria

0161

IRO - IDENTIFICATION CARD
FOR CHILDREN UNDER TEN YEARS
IRO-IDENDITÄTS-KARTE
FÜR KINDER UNTER 10 JAHRE

NAME *Rosjanski Aron*
NAME

DATE OF BIRTH *24.7.48* AGE
GEBURTSDATUM ALTER

HAIR *Polish Jew* WEIGHT. EYES
HAARFARBE GESICHT AUGENFARBE

NATIONALITY *Rosjanski*
NATIONALITÄT

FATHER *Dunn* NAME AUSWEIS NR.
VATER

MOTHER NAME AUSWEIS NR.
MUTTER

ISSUED AT *EBELSBURG 4. Aug. 48*
AUSGESTELLT IN

ISSUED BY *Thomas J. Dunn*
AUSGESTELLT VON

APPROVED
THOMAS J. DUNN
ADMINISTRATOR

Figure 97: Aron Rosjanski DP-IRO identification card, DP Camp Ebelsberg



Figure 98: 1948 Aron Rosjanski, DP camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria



Figure 99: 1948 Abram and Aron Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria



Figure 100: 1948 Abram and Aron Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria



Figure 101: 1949/50 (L)Aron Rosjanski, Feiga (Phyllis) Zuchowicki and (R) Abram Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsberg, Linz Austria.

When Abram was born in my parent's house on September 5, 1945, there was no physician or Mohel available and he was not circumcised and had no birth certificate. I did not think circumcision was important because the Germans would check males to see if you were Jewish by demanding that they drop their pants to see if they were circumcised. When Chaim Polonski visited us in Linz, Austria in 1947, he talked me into having Abram circumcised. He told me Abram would be self-conscious when he gets older, if he was not circumcised. In the DP Camp hospital, many young boys were being circumcised and on one day, one of the other young boys could not be circumcised due to an illness and Abram took his place on the operating room schedule and was circumcised when he was about 2½ years old.

In 1948, Abram developed scarlet fever and was quarantined in a children's hospital outside of the DP Camp in Linz Austria for six weeks just after Aron was born. I visited the hospital each day and was able to see Abram through the hospital window but I hid under the window so he would not see me.

In 1951, Dr. Herman Lenz, a neurologist, in Linz Austria re-evaluated Yankel and he also certified that Yankel had severe Parkinson's disease and was disabled. Yankel was sent to a hospital in the mountains of Badgastein, Austria during the summer for rehabilitation. During that trip, he became ill and developed jaundice (hepatitis) most likely from food but he made a full recovery.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

DP Camp Ebelsberg originally had a population of 2000 displaced persons and then became overcrowded. Ebelsberg was the former factory premises of the Herman Goering works and ORT had a school in Ebelsberg. After 1949 Ebelsberg served as a collection point for those not being able to (or waiting for) immigrate, invalids, and chronically ill.²⁰⁴

204 DP camp ORT

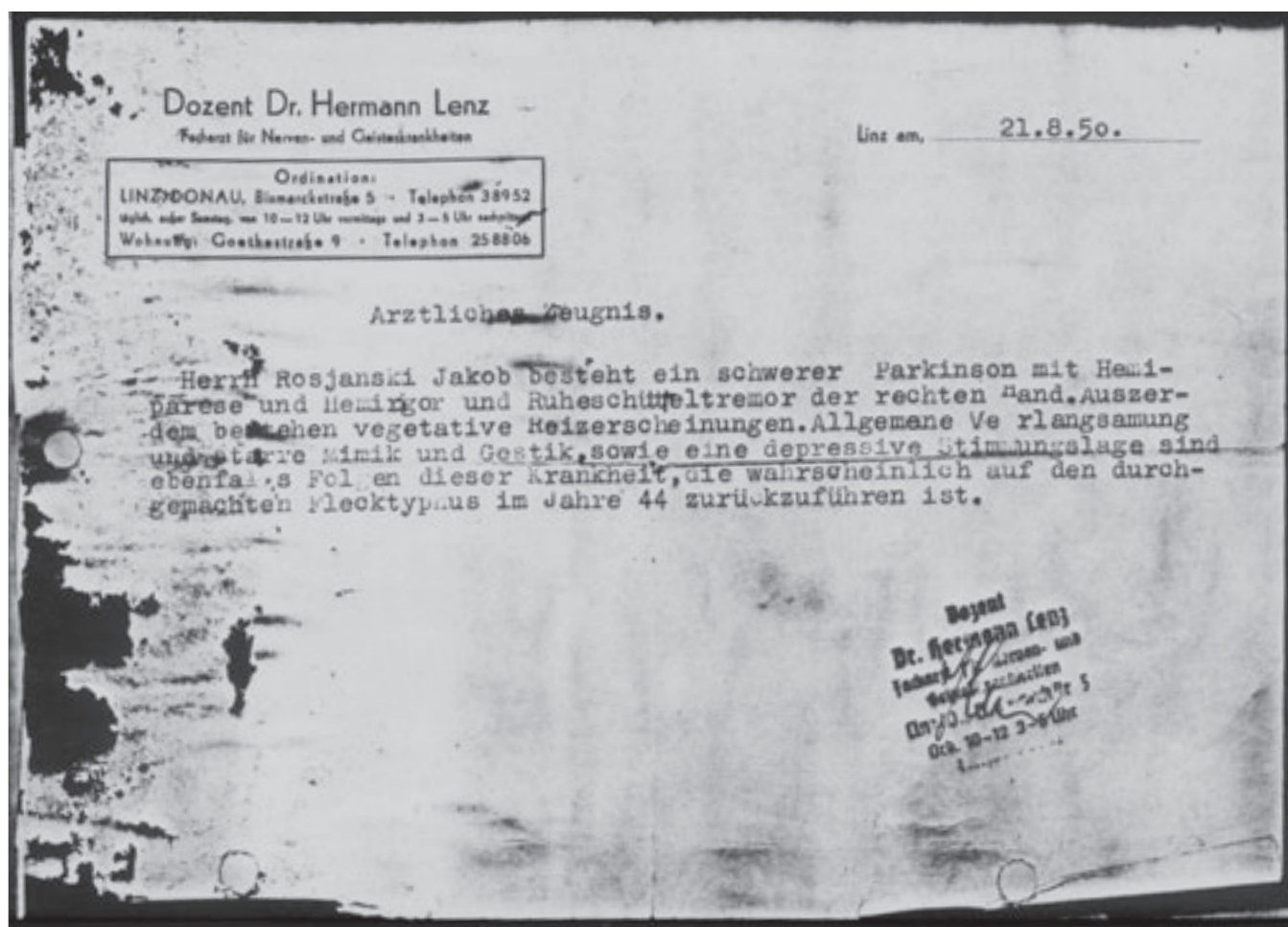


Figure 102: Jakob (Jacob) Rosjanski medical certificate

Yankel was well educated in Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish and some Russian. He was always an avid reader of Yiddish books and newspapers and wrote beautiful letters especially in Yiddish. In Lager Ebelsberg he wrote and posted notices in newspapers, as did others, that we had survived the war and were searching for family members in the USA, Canada, Argentina, England and other places. We did receive many letters and some assistance in the form of some money, \$5.00 to \$10.00, packages of clothing and food from cousins, aunts and uncles.

The following are some who helped us, which we greatly appreciated!!

- Yankel's aunt from New York City sent us beautiful clothing that was exactly my size. She sent me a beautiful silk dress, which I often wore. She passed away before we arrived in NY in 1951. Originally from Zelva.
- Yankel's maternal aunt from New York city, Libby (married Louis Levine) and then remarried Sam Asofsky. They sent us letters and packages of clothing. They meet us at Penn station with Yankel's paternal cousin, when we arrived in NYC in April 1951. Originally from Zelva.
- Chanah Laya Lazerowitz and brother, Yankel's paternal cousins, originally from Zelva living in New York, sent us letters, packages and a few dollars. They came to Abe and Nancy's wedding in 1970.
- Morris Orlin, my maternal cousin, Abraham Orlinski's older brother from Slonim sent us packages from New York City. He came to Abe and Nancy's wedding.
- David and Bea Arlinski, my maternal cousin and wife, sent us packages. They also came to Abe and Nancy's wedding.
- My maternal cousins, Orlinski, Orlin from Slonim Poland (Belarus) sent letters and packages from N Y and NJ.

- Archik, Aaron Simons (originally Slotnick, Zlotnicki) and his wife Mollie, was Yankel's maternal Uncle from Detroit, Michigan. Archik immigrated from Zelva before WWI and before Yankel was born. He initially immigrated to Israel then to Boston then to Detroit. They had seven grown children
- Morris, Joe, Yale, Martha, Kate, Natalie, and Jean. Archik and his family, especially Yale, greatly helped us immigrate to the USA!
- Shiman Simmons (changed his name from Zuchowicki), was my paternal Uncle, immigrated to London England before WWI. His son died during military action in WWII and he had a daughter, Sue Simmons. My mother also had a cousin, Pastolsky, who also lived in London. They both belonged to the same "Shul" (synagogue) and did not know each other until they saw Yankel's posting in the newspaper. They became close friends and both helped us. My cousin was a tailor and sent many beautiful clothes for Abe and Aron and a coat for me. Our last contact from Sue Simmons was in 1961.
- My paternal (Zuchowicki) cousins from Canada, my father's sister's children wrote us letters, sent us occasional packages of food like sugar, prunes and some clothing and a few dollars.
- We had no contact from Argentina. My mother's older sister, Fradel, immigrated to Buenos Aires during the turn-of-the-century, about the time of WWI, and had two daughters.



Figure 103: (L to R) Channa Laya Lazerowitz and brother, Morris Orlin, Bea and David Arlinski, at Abe and Nancy wedding 6/21/1970

Immigration plans in Ebelsberg

Our initial immigration plan was to immigrate to Israel. We were told that if we immigrated to Israel it would be difficult to buy things in Israel. We pooled our money and resources as one family to purchase household goods including two white porcelain pans that I still own and use. We purchased watches, silverware, and materials. Yankel purchased a tallis, a tallis bag and a pen. From the time the Germans confiscated my gold wedding band and jewelry in 1942 I never purchased another wedding band! We hand and machine made our own linens, pillows, "perenes" (bed comforters) and covers (duvets). I also embroidered my initials SR in the perene duvets.



Figure 104: *Sara Rosjanski Perene duvet*



Figure 105: *Sara Rosjanski; RS initials on the duvets*



Figure 106: *Sara Rosjanski watch*



Figure 107: *Jacob Rosjanski watch*



Figure 108: *Jacob Rosjanski (Montblanc) pen*



Figure 109: *Jacob Rosjanski Tallis bag*



Figure 110: *Sara Rosjanski sterling flatware*

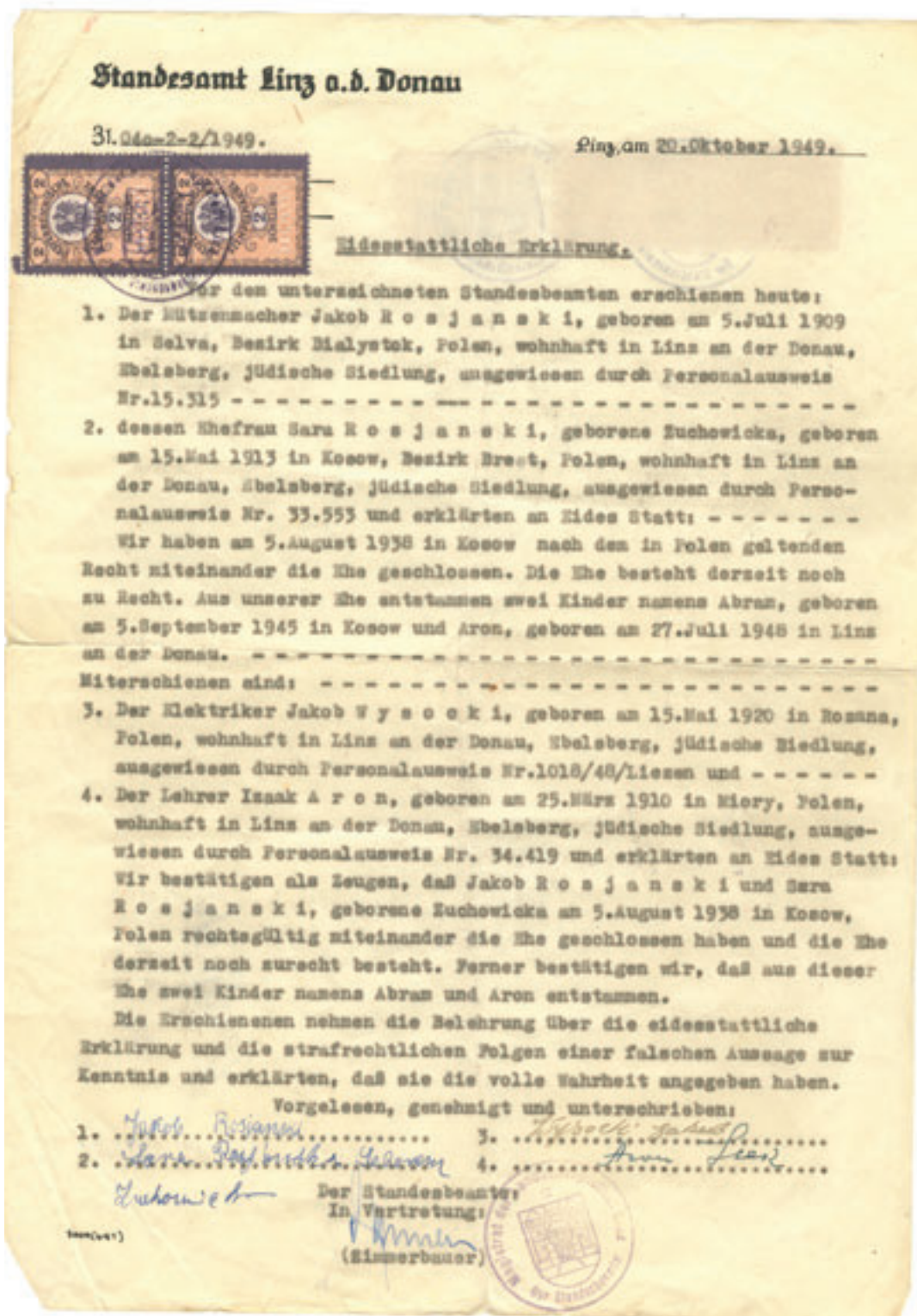


Figure 111: Jakob and Sara Rosjanski certified affidavit with witnesses, October 20, 1949.

All of our official birth, marriage and other documents were destroyed during the war. We therefore needed to prepare official certified documents, affidavits, with witness to verify our names, date of birth, location of birth, marriage date as well as our children's date of birth and location.

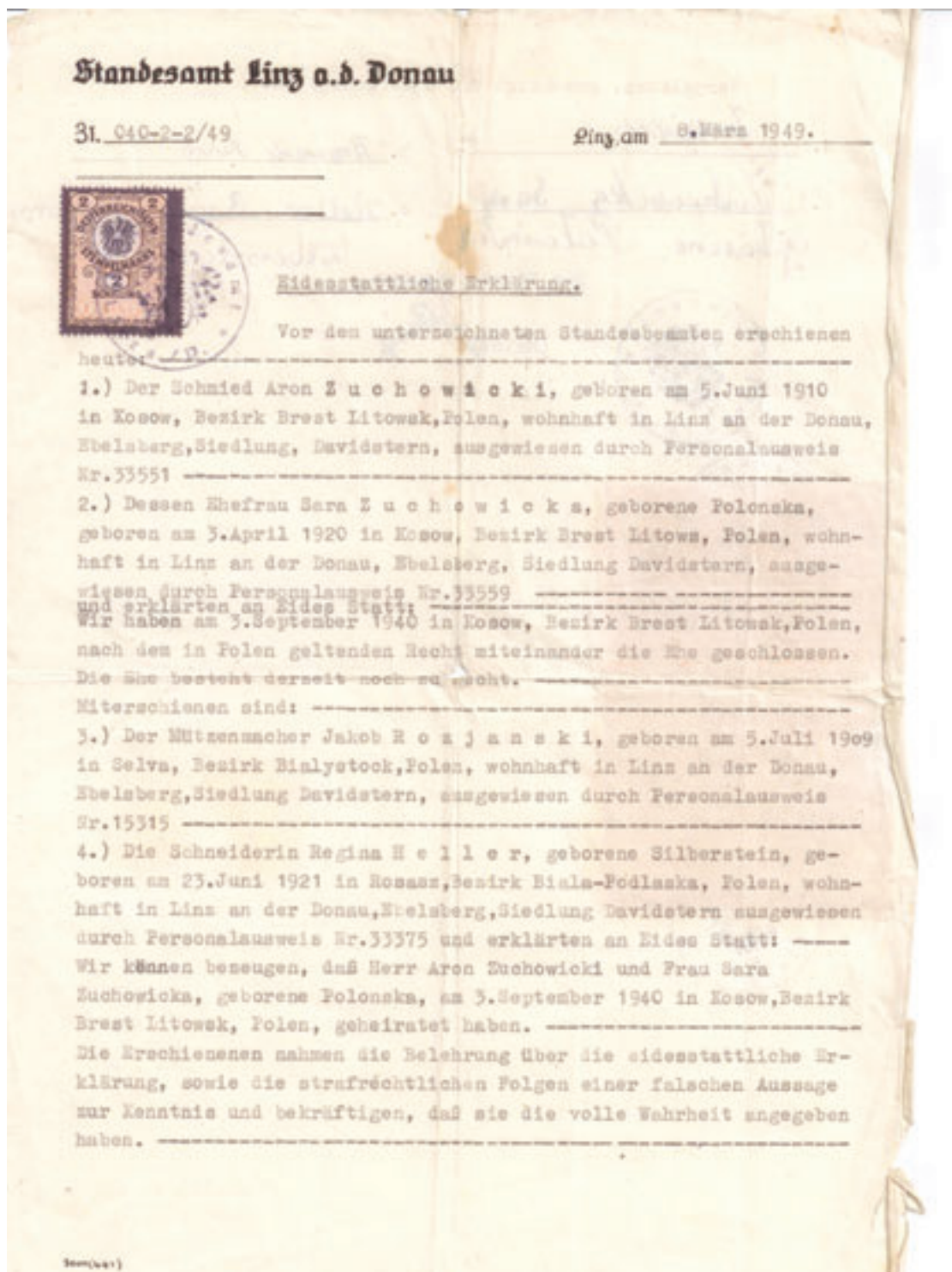


Figure 112: Aron and Sara Polonska Zuchowicki certified affidavit with witnesses, March 8, 1949.

We planned to start a carpentry business in Israel with another DP family. We pooled our assets and “Russian Gold rubles” to purchase carpentry tools. We packed all the tools into wood crates and sent them off to Israel when the other family immigrated to Israel. When it was our turn, we all applied to immigrate to Israel. A medical exam was required to get approval for immigration. The immigration doctor examined my brother Aron and told him that he had to have a varicose vein operation on his legs before he would be allowed to immigrate! My brother scheduled an appointment with the DP Camp hospital surgeon and the surgeon told my brother he did not need a varicose vein operation. In

fact, the doctor said I have larger varicose veins and I would not have my varicose veins operated on. Yankel without question was not approved for immigration to Israel because of his obvious tremor and disability from Parkinson's disease!²⁰⁵ We were very upset and distraught. We spent most of our money on carpentry tools so we tried to locate the tools in Israel. We wrote Chaim Polonski, who had already immigrated to Israel, for help. Chaim wrote back and said there was so much cargo on the port docks that he could not find our cargo with the tools.

Yankel and Aron discussed our rejections to immigrate to Israel with others. One Jewish man from Poland, who was a former sugar entrepreneur before the war, told Yankel and Aron, "don't listen to them!" and apply for immigration to the United States. In late 1949, we all applied for immigration to the United States. Yankel's uncle, Archik (Aaron) Simons, and family sent us papers as sponsors. Yankel wrote Archik that we did not want to immigrate unless Aron, Sara and Phyllis could also immigrate. Archik then wrote us that he would try to help all of us to immigrate to the US.

In a very short time, a few months, Aron, Sara and Phyllis were approved to immigrate and received immigration documents for the United States but not us. This became another difficult time and many tears were shed. We were all happy that they were approved for immigration, but Aron and Sara did not want to leave for the United States until we received approval. Aron and Sara were our only immediate family and we also did not want to be separated from them. Yankel and I, as well as the DP aid agency, told them, "if you can go, you should go", and you can help us more from the United States than by staying in Austria. I really did not believe that, but I still believed they should immigrate since they had the opportunity and hopefully help us more from America. We all lived together as one family unit and this separation was difficult.

IRO-WELFARE-REGISTRATION		
Name	Nationality	Birthdate
ROSJANSKI JAKOB.	Polish.	5.7.1908.
Birthplace	Religion	Occupation
Poland.	Jewish.	Glasmacher.
IRO Identity Card	Address	
elig. 82.200	STEJA	Kosten
Interviewed.	Wife Sara	1913
P.S. 1948.	Son Abraham	1945
	• Aron	1948
Jakob:		
Med. Code II	April 51	U.S.A

Figure 113: Jakob Rosjanski DP-IRO disability identification card, Medical code 6

205 Moshe Shapira, Minister of Immigration, Israel; 9/1948 Instructions for providing Visas to Immigrants – "A special strictness should be demanded in relation to the immigrant's health." This caused at a minimum a delay to the immigration of the chronically ill and handicap or in our case a rejection!!

2 X CMV DF 82.200/3

ROSJANSKI * Jakob Poln. Jude Lg. Belsberg

S. 7. 09

* Sara geb. Zuchowicka 15. 5. 13

* Abram S. 9. 45

* ARON 27. 7. 48.

=====

ZUCHOWICKI Aron reg reg

T.
F.-El. Lea

* left for U S A, in 16. 3. 51. 6

Figure 114: Jakob Rosjanski DP identification card.

NAME ZUCHOWICKI,	82.238/3
geb. Name:	DP Karten
Vorname: ARON	IRO Identity Card
Geb.-Datum: 5. 5. 10.	IRO Case Card
Geb.-Ort: KOSOW-BRESI-POL.	Fiche Individuelle
Vater: *	Italienische Kartei
Mutter: *	Schwabing - Karte
	AJDC - Belsen
	CCLJ - Karte
T/D 846193	1. KK. Ord 82238/4 1.5.65. F
V. ABRAHAM.	Entnommen am: 20. 10. 61. AS
M ROSA-ORLINSKI	27. 11. 63. AS
	29. 6. 67. AS.
	B.W.

Figure 115: Aron Zuchowicki DP identification card

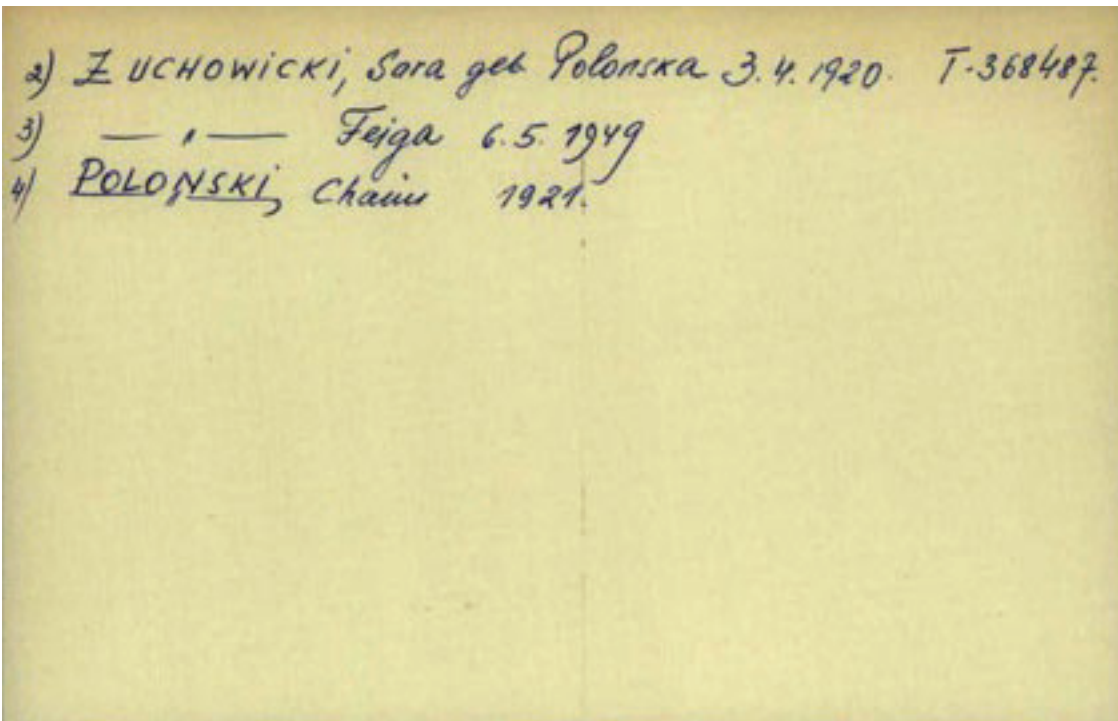


Figure 116: Zuchowicki DP identification card

Aron, Sara and Phyllis immigrated to the United States in April, 1950. They went by ship (M.S. General McRae²⁰⁶ on March 15, 1950). The transatlantic voyage was very difficult, especially for Sara, and they settled in Cincinnati Ohio because jobs were available in its industrial community. Other Holocaust survivors, “greeners” (new comers), also immigrated to Cincinnati and the Jewish community helped them. In Cincinnati, Aron and Sara, approached Rabbi Elizer Silver, who was a very influential leader of the Orthodox community. He had the reputation of helping Jews who emigrated from Europe after World War II but he was not helpful in our immigration process.

206 ITS documents – M.S. General McRae

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION MASS RESETTLEMENT TO UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SAILING IN BRIDGEHAVEN FOR NEW YORK, N. Y. March 14th, 1950, ON NOTE "GENERAL MCRAE".														Code No. 456789	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
WOM. ROLL NO.	SIRGP. CASE NO.	FORM CH/1 NO.	Family	NAME S	Given	IND STAT.	REL. STAT.	REL. STAT.	REL. STAT.	REL. STAT.	REL. STAT.	REL. STAT.	REL. STAT.	SPONSOR INDIVIDUAL AND OR AGENCY, U.S.A.	DESTINATION TO U.S.A.
Tirrita															
1	118077	640142	Borach	Paul	S	POL	Orth.	S	Ma	37	POL	writer	G. Borach	46 Elmer St. Hartford 5, Conn.	
2	131605	1055267	Dorach	Heinrich	S	YUG	RC	S	Ma	28	YUG	butcher	E. Jankowski	30-21 37th St. Long Island City 3, NY.	
3	129555	749800	Everlina	Stepas	C	LIT	RC	Ma	Ma	36	LIT	taller	A. Melius-	109 Walton St. Brooklyn, NY.	
4	129555	749800	Everlina	Kleopa	C	LIT	RC	Ma	F	39	LIT	housewife	A. Melius-	109 Walton St. Brooklyn, NY.	
5	124413	630630	Fedoruk	Maria	C	POL	RC	W	F	41	POL	house- keeper	A. Lock	Ellis College, Newton Square, Pa.	
6	118093	1073376	Gus	Katerina	S	YUG	RC	S	F	26	YUG	domestic	W. Giers	347 Malleable St. Sharon, Pa.	
7	148265	1063174	Klem	Nikola	S	YUG	RC	Ma	Ma	47	YUG	gardener	St. Lorens	Rt. 2, Quintana Rd. Prairie View, Ill.	
8	148265	1063174	Klem	Rosina	S	YUG	RC	Ma	F	46	YUG	housewife	St. Lorens	Rt. 2, Quintana Rd. Prairie View, Ill.	
9	148265	1063174	Klem	Anna	S	YUG	RC	S	F	21	YUG	maid	St. Lorens	Rt. 2, Quintana Rd. Prairie View, Ill.	
10	134627	614461	Laborovics	Maria	S	POL	RC	Ma	Ma	44	POL	fact. work.	E. Korab	296 Adams St. Newark 5, NJ.	
11	134627	614461	Laborovics	Elsa	S	GER	RC	Ma	F	29	GER	housewife	E. Korab	296 Adams St. Newark 5, NJ.	
12	134627	614461	Laborovics	Marian	S	POL	RC	S	Ma	3	GER	child	E. Korab	296 Adams St. Newark 5, NJ.	

Figure 117: IRO – March 15, 1950, MS General McRae passengers

Page 29 Code No 456789															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
495	131605	629286	Boris	Isaigo	C	LIT	Orth.	Ma	Ma	43	LIT	housewife	WLO	Rt. 13, St. Peter, Hins.	
496	131605	629286	Boris	Isaigo	C	LIT	Orth.	Ma	Ma	12	LIT	pupil	WLO	Rt. 13, St. Peter, Hins.	
497	134449	699939	Boris	Edgure	C	LIT	Orth.	Ma	Ma	36	LIT	farmer	WLO	Rt. 1, St. Peter, Hins.	
498	134449	699939	Boris	Milijana	C	LIT	Orth.	Ma	F	36	LIT	housewife	WLO	Marion, New Jersey	
499	134449	699939	Boris	Mara	C	LIT	Orth.	S	F	6	LIT	pupil	WLO	Marion, New Jersey	
499	128353	628640	Benedjion	Christopher	C	GRE	Orth.	S	Ma	21	GRE	schooler	E. Housatonic 37 E Mahan Ave. (HONG) Chicago, Ill.		
500	122143	628640	Benedjion	Gerda	C	GRE	Orth.	S	Ma	27	GRE	schooler	S. Poadgald 121 Stuart St. (HONG) Boston, Mass.		
501	112710	621236	Bernicki	Jankiel	S	POL	Jew.	S	Ma	25	POL	joiner	USHL	15 Park Row, New York 7, New York	
502	125236	62231/4	Zuchowicki	Aron	C	POL	Jew.	Ma	Ma	40	POL	locksmith	USHL	1430 Central Parkway Cincinnati, Ohio	
503	125236	62231/4	Zuchowicki	Sara	C	POL	Jew.	Ma	F	30	POL	housewife	USHL	1430 Central Parkway Cincinnati, Ohio	
504	125236	62231/4	Zuchowicki	Feiga	C	POL	Jew.	S	F	16M	ADJ	infant	USHL	1430 Central Parkway Cincinnati, Ohio	
505	16094	79997/2	Egonovic	Anton	C	YUG	R.C.	Ma	Ma	49	YUG	general farmer	WOWC	1200 E 60 St. Cleveland, Ohio	
506	129936	749909	Eyle	Falkena	C	LIT	R.C.	Ma	Ma	31	LIT	labourer	WOWC	1095 E 71 St. Cleveland, Ohio	
507	129936	749909	Eyle	Marek	C	LIT	R.C.	Ma	F	31	LIT	housewife	WOWC	1095 E 71 St. Cleveland, Ohio	
508	129936	749909	Eyle	Dela	C	USHL	R.C.	S	F	6M	GR	infant	WOWC	1095 E 71 St. Cleveland, Ohio	
509	129936	749909	Eyle	Esteban	C	USHL	R.C.	S	Ma	4	GR	child	WOWC	1095 E 71 St. Cleveland, Ohio	
510	129936	749909	Eyle	Emmanuel	C	LIT	R.C.	S	Ma	6	LIT	child	WOWC	1095 E 71 St. Cleveland, Ohio	
511	30650	759115	Eyswyk	Moslaw	C	POL	R.C.	Ma	Ma	29	POL	labourer	WOWC	2252 Professor Ave. (St. Eyswyk) Cleveland 13, Ohio	
512	30650	759115	Eyswyk	Eysward	C	POL	R.C.	S	Ma	4	GR	child	WOWC	2252 Professor Ave. (St. Eyswyk) Cleveland 13, Ohio	

Figure 118: Aron, Sara and Feiga (Phyllis) Zuchowicki passenger list, #502, #503, #504, March 15, 1950, MS General McRae

Displaced Persons Camp (DP): Lager Wels (Asten) 1001: October 1950 to April 1951

After Sara, Aron and Phyllis immigrated to the USA in 1950, we were moved into a smaller building in Linz, Austria (*DP camp Wels, Asten, Linz*).²⁰⁷ The building was also nice and warm in winter and Abram started attending a Yiddish kindergarten. We were very concerned that we might not be able to immigrate to the United States, so we also applied to immigrate to Canada in November 1950.

AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE
c/o I. A. D. P. - U. S. A. C. A.
APO 174 P. M. N. Y. N. Y.
CIVILIAN ADDRESS: LINZ, ZOLLAMTSSTRASSE 7

November 27th, 1950.

REGISTRATION FOR CANADA - DECEMBER 1950

Personal Data Form

Principal Applicant: IRO -lig. No: 82200

Name: ROSJANSKI Sara, nee'Zachowicka
Date of Birth: 15.5.1913
Place of Birth: Kosow, Poland
Nationality: Polish
Religion: Jewish
Years of experience as dressmaker: 3 years

Dependents:

Name:	Jacob	Abram	Aron
Rel. to head:	husband	son	son
Date of Birth:	5.7.1909	5.9.1945	27.7.1948
Place of Birth:	Zelva, Poland	Poland	Linz, Austria
Nationality:	Polish	Polish	Polish
Religion :	Jewish	Jewish	Jewish
Profession:	Hatsmaker		
Years of experience:	2 years		

Present address: DP Camp Wels, 1001

Encls. : Curriculum Vitae
Trade Certificates

Figure 119: American Joint Distribution Committee, US zone Austria, Canadian Jewish Archives, JIAS Montreal Immigration Case Files #115-41107, November 1950.

²⁰⁷ Moved to Asten (Linz), DP Camp Wels, Lager1001 in October, 1950.

In 1950-1951, President Truman signed a bill to allow ill, but not contagious individuals, to immigrate to the United States. Yankel was examined by a US immigration physician in Austria who had a reputation of being difficult and would not approve everyone, so I placed a five-dollar bill under the doctor's papers during the exam. The doctor did approve Yankel for immigration. The next step was for us to have an interview for immigration with the US consulate. We took a train to the interview with a suitcase and two young children, which made the trip difficult. The consulate noticed that Yankel had a tremor and the Korean War was in progress and he asked "what will Yankel do and how will he be able to help America?" I immediately answered by saying "we have two sons, who will help and give back to America!" With that he gave Aron and Abe some candy and there were no further questions.



Figure 120: 1950 Aron and Abram Rosjanski, DP Camp Ebelsberg or DP Camp Wels, Linz Austria

In 1951, we were given approval to immigrate to the United States based on the Displaced Persons immigration act (of June 25, 1948, section 2C, signed by President Harry Truman)²⁰⁸ and family sponsorship. Yankel's maternal uncle Archik (Aaron) Simons with his wife Malka (Mollie) and seven children lived in Detroit, Michigan. Archik posted a \$1,000.00 bond in 1951, which was critical for our immigration due to Yankel's illness. Archik could not sign the sponsorship papers because of his age so his youngest son, Yale, signed. This bond was in place for 5 years until we became US citizens in 1956, and the bond was released.

208 Helped individuals who were persecuted by the Nazi government.

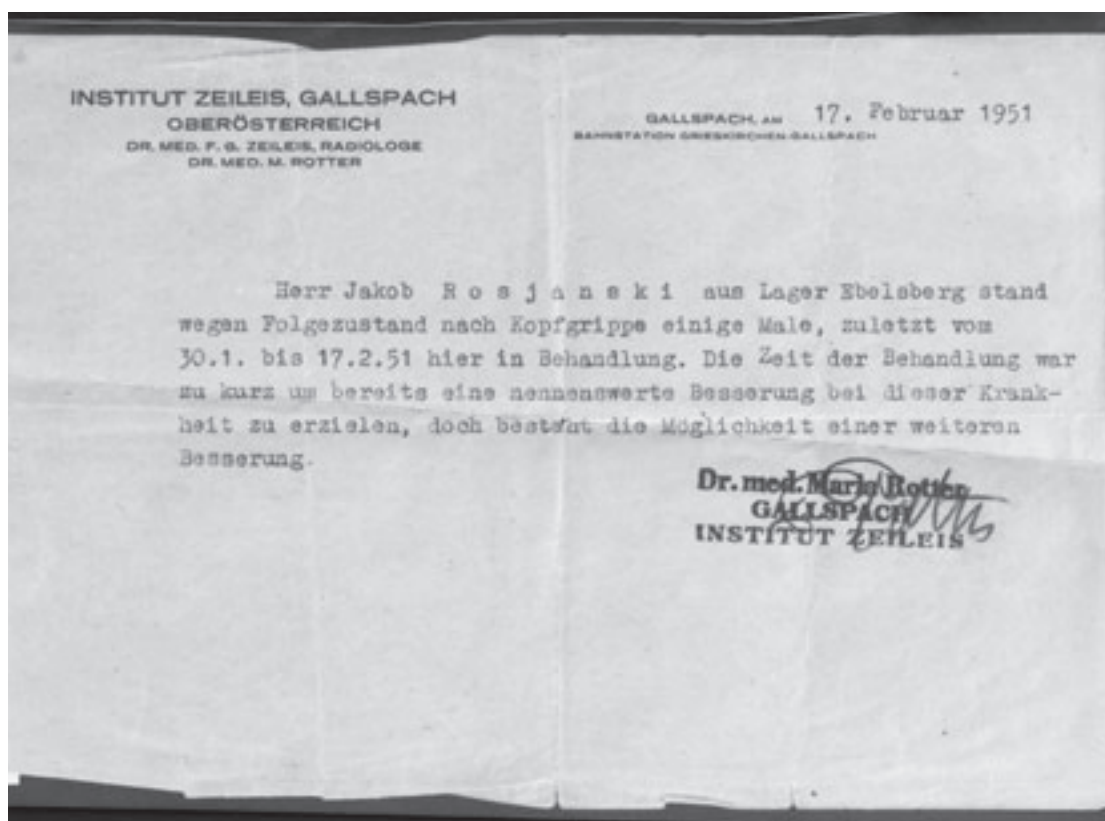


Figure 121: Jakob Rosjanski medical certificate

Medical list of non-tuberculous disabled who are ^{1/1} of vocational training									
Ser. No.	Name	Sex	Age	Address	Dist. No.	Disability	Stability	Classification	Occupation
1.	Jakobson	Male	37	Comp Stage	17010	edgious abt. heart r.d.s. atrophy	VII	Driver	
2.	Sam. Hallin	Male	41	"	20413/3	St.g. front. angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII	Driver angler	
3.	Sam. Hallin	Male	39	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII	Student/outst. of shoes	
4.	Sam. Hallin	Male	33	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII/VI	Student/outst. of shoes	
5.	Sam. Hallin	Male	43	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII	Student/outst. of shoes	
6.	Sam. Hallin	Male	44	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII/VI	Student/outst. of shoes	
7.	Sam. Hallin	Male	30	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII/X	Student/outst. of shoes	
8.	Sam. Hallin	Male	41	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII	Student/outst. of shoes	
9.	Sam. Hallin	Male	32	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII	Student/outst. of shoes	
10.	Sam. Hallin	Male	26	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	I	Student/outst. of shoes	
11.	Sam. Hallin	Male	27	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	X	Student/outst. of shoes	
12.	Sam. Hallin	Male	43	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	2/VII	Student/outst. of shoes	
13.	Sam. Hallin	Male	30	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	I	Student/outst. of shoes	
14.	Sam. Hallin	Male	48	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VI/X	Student/outst. of shoes	
15.	Sam. Hallin	Male	35	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VII	Student/outst. of shoes	
16.	Sam. Hallin	Male	29	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	IIa	Student/outst. of shoes	
17.	Sam. Hallin	Male	36	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	IXb	Student/outst. of shoes	
18.	Sam. Hallin	Male	41	"	20413/3	Angulus, vln. edg. fovea	VI	Student/outst. of shoes	

Figure 122: Jakob Rosjanski disabled-DP list #18 – Parkinsons Disease Post encephalitis, ITS



Figure 123: *Aaron Simons*



Figure 124: *Yale and Bobbie Simons with Abe and Nancy Ross, Scottsdale, Arizona 2000*

Immigration USA – Coming to America: April 1951

Archik Simons wanted us to move to Detroit and live near him and his family but because Aron, Sara, and Phyllis were in Cincinnati, Ohio we wanted to immigrate to Cincinnati. Archik was very disappointed. Yankel wanted us to fit in and for us to have a short last name “Ross”²⁰⁹ instead of Rosjanski.

We packed all our worldly possessions, clothing, household goods and sterling silver flatware into a large wooden “casten”²¹⁰ (crate) that my brother and Yankel made before they immigrated, and it was shipped to Cincinnati. We also packed the Army blankets we were given, the “perenes” (comforters) we purchased and the pillows, linens, duvet covers with my initials on them that I made. Before we immigrated in 1951, I purchased two sterling silver, three candle, candelabras for Shabbos in Linz, Austria. One was for us and one was a gift for Sara and Aron.

We had three remaining 10 Russian ruble gold coins from Poland-Belarus that were dated, turn of the century, with the relief of Nicholas, the last Czar of Russia. I was not sure if I could bring them to America, so I covered them with felt and dress material and attached them as buttons to my silk dress. When Abe, Aron and Phyllis were older, I gave each of them one of these gold coins.



Figure 125: *Sara Rosjanski Sterling silver candelabra from Linz Austria, 1951*



Figure 126: *Gold coin, 10 Russian Ruble, dated 1900*

Most immigrants traveled by ship across the Atlantic Ocean but because of Yankel’s disability, we flew. In April 1951 Abe, Aron, Yankel and I were transported from Linz, Austria to Munich, Germany and were assisted by the International Relief Organization (IRO). We stayed about a week in Germany awaiting the flight. The first day we stayed in a dirty room that smelled from the humidity of the showers, which was terrible. Aron who was 2½ years old began to choke, sputter and turn blue. I immediately grabbed him and turn him upside down and hit his back between his shoulders and a penny came out of his mouth and he took a breath and turned pink. After that first night and day in Germany we were given a better room awaiting our flight. In Munich, Germany, Riem Airport, US Zone, we boarded KLM, flight #61²¹¹ on April 16, 1951 and flew to New York City, Idlewild Airport (now JFK). The flight was about 24 hours and we stopped in Holland then in a Canadian airport where we stayed in a very humid and damp building that had an unpleasant humid odor (from the showers) for a few hours. I could not wait to leave Canada.

209 The town of Ros Belarus is 20 miles from Zelva were Yankel’s father, Aron, was born (? Origin of family name)

210 Yiddish for crate

211 ITS document-IRO flight

51-100

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION
U.S. BOMB AIR STAGING CENTER
MUNICH

GENERAL ROLL OF DISPLACED PERSONS DEPARTING BY AIR TO THE UNITED STATES BY REGULAR DUTCH AIRLINES
I.R.O. FLIGHT * K.L.M. # 61* ON 16 APRIL 1951
FROM MUNICH REIN AIRPORT, GERMANY, TO NEW YORK, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
Roll List No.	Class No.	I.R.O. No.	Vol. No.	NAME	Sex	Religion	Mar. Status	Age	Country of Birth	Occupation	Spouse	Destination in U.S.A.			
1.	A 2128	159/2206	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Polish	Mar.	28	Poland	housewife	Wife	627 W Pine St.			
2.	A 2129	159/2206	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Female	Polish	Mar.	31	Poland	housewife	Wife	St. Peter, Minn.			
3.	A 2130	159/2206	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Polish	Mar.	30	Poland	none	Wife	same			
4.	A 2131	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Polish	Mar.	9	Poland	none	Wife	same			
5.	A 2172	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Hungary	Mar.	27	Hungary	waiter	Wife	Hotel Keystone, Pittsburgh			
6.	A 2173	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Germany	Mar.	18	Germany	none	Wife	same			
7.	A 2174	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Germany	Mar.	20	Germany	none	Wife	same			
8.	A 2175	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Polish	Mar.	30	Poland	worker	Wife	15 Park Ave			
9.	A 2176	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Polish	Mar.	30	Poland	none	Wife	New York			
10.	A 2177	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Polish	Mar.	3	Germany	none	Wife	same			
11.	A 2178	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Hungary	Mar.	18	Hungary	farmer	Wife	695 E 1st St.			
12.	A 2179	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Hungary	Mar.	18	Hungary	none	Wife	Peconic, Cal.			
13.	A 2180	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Germany	Mar.	30	Germany	none	Wife	same			
14.	A 2181	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Poland	Mar.	44	Poland	physician	Wife	15 Park Ave			
15.	A 2182	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Russia	Mar.	41	Russia	none	Wife	New York			
16.	A 2183	159/2207	117773	A-6122 UNGERER	Male	Germany	Mar.	30	Germany	none	Wife	same			

Figure 127: IRO flight—KLM #61 passenger list, April 16, 1951

Page 2 (I.R.O. # 61)

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
17.	A 2182	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Indur	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	39	Hung.	none	7,120	Wife	248 Howe Str.	
18.	A 2183	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Ester	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	24	Poland	sales.	7,120	Wife	Brooklyn, NY	
19.	A 2184	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Rosetta	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	34	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same	
20.	A 2185	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Rosetta	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	39	Poland	farmer	7,120	Wife	79 Ridge Str.	
21.	A 2186	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Leo	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	25	Poland	none	7,120	Wife	New York City, NY	
22.	A 2187	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Rhea	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	1	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same	
23.	A 2188	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Joseph Alr	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	30	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same	
24.	A 2189	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Joseph	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	31	Poland	none	7,120	Wife	same	
25.	A 2190	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Genia	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	27	Poland	salesman	7,120	Wife	15 Park Ave	
26.	A 2191	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Genia	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	3	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	New York	
27.	A 2192	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Alexander	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	15	Hung.	none	7,120	Wife	same	
28.	A 2193	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Christine	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	6	Austria	none	7,120	Wife	44 4th Ave New York	
29.	A 2194	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Maria	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	16	Poland	student	7,120	Wife	same	
30.	A 2195	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Michael	C	Wkr. Gr.C, N/Y	20	Poland	laborer	7,120	Wife	same		
31.	A 2196	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Julia	C	Wkr. Gr.C, N/Y	26	Poland	none	7,120	Wife	34 Duane Str.		
32.	A 2197	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Michael	C	Wkr. Gr.C, N/Y	3	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	2nd 16 6, New York		
33.	A 2198	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Isaac	C	Wkr. Gr.C, N/Y	2	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same		
34.	A 2199	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Leila	C	Wkr. Gr.C, N/Y	30	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same		
35.	A 2200	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Leonard	C	Polish, Jew	N/Y	30	Poland	dressmaker	7,120	Wife	932 10th St.	
36.	A 2201	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Sarah	E	Polish, Jew	N/Y	38	Poland	seamstress	7,120	Wife	Brooklyn, NY's Epstain	
37.	A 2202	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Sarah	E	Polish, Jew	N/Y	42	Poland	speculator	7,120	Wife	1430 Central Parkway	
38.	A 2203	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Abraham	E	Polish, Jew	N/Y	6	Poland	none	7,120	Wife	Cincinnati, Ohio	
39.	A 2204	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Isaac	E	Polish, Jew	N/Y	3	Austria	none	7,120	Wife	same	
40.	A 2205	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Isaac	E	Czech, Jew	N/Y	35	Czech	clerk	7,120	Wife	42 Stiegel Str.	
41.	A 2206	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Sarah	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	31	Czech	none	7,120	Wife	Brooklyn, NY	
42.	A 2207	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Sarah	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	4	Czech	none	7,120	Wife	same	
43.	A 2208	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Abraham	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	3	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same	
44.	A 2209	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Avigdor	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	1	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same	
45.	A 2210	159/2207	203594	F-2546	HEILMAN, Alexander	C	Czech, Jew	N/Y	40	Germany	none	7,120	Wife	same	

Figure 128: KLM #61 passenger list, April 16, 1951—Rosjanski family, # 36, #37, #38, #39.

This is to certify that **SARA ROSJANSKI** **APR 17 1951**
 was admitted to the United States on **APR 17 1951**
 at **NEW YORK, N. Y.**
 as a **D.F.** immigrant for **permanent residence**
 under Sec. **2.C** of the Act of **JUN 25 1948**
 and has been registered under the Alien Registration Act, 1940.
 Visa Application No. 1 - **7125**

DATE OF BIRTH	SEX	RACE	EYES	HEIGHT
11-11-15	F	POLE	BLU	5'10"

Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization.
 GPO 16-48400-3

This is to certify that **ABRAHAM ROSJANSKI** **APR 17 1951**
 was admitted to the United States on **APR 17 1951**
 at **NEW YORK, N. Y.**
 as a **D.F.** immigrant for **permanent residence**
 under Sec. **2.C** of the Act of **JUN 25 1948**
 and has been registered under the Alien Registration Act, 1940.
 Visa Application No. 1 - **442451**

DATE OF BIRTH	SEX	RACE	EYES	HEIGHT
7-9-42	M	POLE	BLU	5'11"

Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization.
 GPO 16-48400-3

Figure 129: Immigration card (Green card) April 17, 1951, Sara and Abraham Rosjanski

3 **TEMPORARY** **Mo**
RECEIPT
PHOTOGRAPH
OF
VALID
HOLDER
FOR 3 MONTHS
FROM DATE OF
RECEIPT
ISSUED

UNITED STATES
 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION
AND
NATURALIZATION
SERVICE
Alien Registration
Receipt Card
 Registration Number

FORM 1-221 (3-16-48) 16-48400-3

This is to certify that **ARON ROSJANSKI** **APR 17 1951**
 was admitted to the United States on **APR 17 1951**
 at **NEW YORK, N. Y.**
 as a **D.F.** immigrant for **permanent residence**
 under Sec. **2.C** of the Act of **JUN 25 1948**
 and has been registered under the Alien Registration Act, 1940.
 Visa Application No. 1 - **412451**

DATE OF BIRTH	SEX	RACE	EYES	HEIGHT
2-11-42	M	POLE	BLU	5'10"

Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization.
 GPO 16-48400-3

Figure 130: Immigration card (Green card), April 17, 1951 Aron Rosjanski

CHAPTER XI

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Arrival NYC – Cincinnati, Ohio: April 17, 1951

As a child, I dreamed of coming to America and now my dream came true! From the moment I arrived, I was so happy to be in America!!!! I knew this was my place and our new home!! My brother, Aron, would also say, “I don’t care about the money we lost when we sent the carpentry tools to Israel. I am so happy that we are in the United States.”

We arrived on April 17, 1951, and landed in Idlewild Airport (now JFK) and were transported to Penn Station in NYC. At Penn Station, we were met by Yankel’s maternal Aunt, Libby (Zlotnicki, Slotnick, his mother’s sister) and her husband, Sam Asofosky; and Yankel’s paternal cousin Chanah (Rosjanski). We spoke Yiddish and it was so nice of them to meet us and they were very kind to Abe and Aron. Abe was 5½ and Aron was 2 ½ and they bought us oranges, ice cream and matchbox cars for the boys. They gave us formal beautiful pictures of Yankel’s mother and a picture of Yankel and his two sisters when they were young that were taken between WWI and II. Yankel was about 7 and was wearing very nice formal clothing and his mother was beautiful and very well dressed. Unfortunately, these pictures were lost. They stayed in touch with us and sent us \$5.00 or \$10.00 from time to time.



Figure 131: *Libby and Sam Asofosky*

A local Jewish aid agency assisted us and we took a train that night from Penn Station to the Cincinnati, Ohio train station, Union Terminal, and arrived April 18, 1951. On the train I looked out and saw many homes near the rail lines and asked myself, “is this America, living so close to the train lines?” Abe and Aron were young and wild, as they ran around, and I followed them, but I could not communicate in English. In Cincinnati, we were assisted by the Jewish Family Service and were so happy to be re-united with Sara, Aron and Phyllis. We lived with Aron and Sara for the next two years and the four of us lived in one room on Hutchins Ave. then Cleveland Ave. We were so close that everyone thought Sara and I were sisters not sisters-in-law.

Life in Cincinnati, Ohio: the early years: 1951 to 1956

When we arrived we spoke no English, only Yiddish. We had no money, two young children to care for and Yankel was disabled from Parkinson’s disease. Still we were so happy to be in America but life was very difficult! I wanted and needed to work, and the Jewish Family service financially helped us and arranged for my first job in a belt factory. My sister in law, Sara, took care of her daughter Phyllis, age 2½, and Abe and Aron. In the summer, I took a bus to work to a hot and humid belt factory where I sweated excessively due to humidity and lack of fans. Early on I had tears in my eyes because my job took no skill and was monotonous and I could not communicate in English. I asked the Jewish Family Service to help me obtain a job as a sewing machine operator, which they did. I worked making ties in a factory, which I liked and was more interesting. One time I took some coffee at a lunch break because I thought it was provided. Because of my language barrier I did not realize I had to contribute to a coffee fund, and I was verbally criticized.



Figure 132: 1952 Sara, Phyllis and Aron Zuchowicki, Cincinnati Ohio

My sister-in-law, Sara, had many bad days where she was ill and could not care of the three children. Even though I would get up in the middle of the night to help Yankel and prepare things for Abe and Aron before work, it was still difficult for Sara to care for three children. I become very conflicted, do I go to work or stay home? Unfortunately, I missed too many workdays, which became a problem. The Jewish Family Service in Cincinnati, who was financially supporting us, felt it was financially better if I would stay home to care for my children and Yankel, and that is what I did. Yankel never worked in the United States and we had to rely on financial aid from the Cincinnati Jewish Family Service, which we appreciated and were very grateful for. This financial support allowed us to live at a bare subsistence poverty level that lasted many years. This became a time of desperate financial hardship causing constant and severe financial and emotional strain and I had to make each penny count. The Jewish Family Service helped us for 5 years then when we became US citizens, we relied on Hamilton county public assistance. Yankel’s cousin Yale, from Detroit, once said “how are you able to live on such a small amount,” but we had no choice!

In the summer of 1951, it was hot and humid in Cincinnati and Yankel and I had difficulty adjusting to the climate, without a fan, living on the third floor of the three-story house. The perspiration would constantly run off of us. We received our first fan in 1953. Yankel's Parkinson's disease with its tremors, movement disorder and muscular weakness became worse with the hot and humid Cincinnati weather. Yankel's mind was very sharp and he would discuss current events and Yiddish literature with many including Rabbi Silver's wife. His Parkinson's disease progressed and the available medications were not effective. He received physical and occupational therapy and then I helped Yankel with a home program of stretching and exercises, that I learned from the physical and occupational therapists. As time went on Yankel required more and more assistance for activities of daily living.

After living with Sara, Aron and Phyllis for two years the Jewish Family Service helped us rent a one-bedroom apartment in the Avondale section of Cincinnati. They also helped us furnish the apartment with used furniture and used basic household items and used clothing. The Jewish Hospital and its clinic provided health and very limited dental care. I altered the used clothing on a used pedal operated Singer sewing machine. Aron went to the JCC preschool and Abe went to the JCC camp with community support in the early 1950's.

Early on in the 1950's I kept a kosher house on a very limited budget. I would clean the apartment and koshered the kitchen. Our everyday utensils were koshered for Pesach by placing utensils in the earth then boiling them. Early on Yankel would take Abe to "Shul" (Synagogue) on "Shabbos" and "Yontif" (Jewish holidays). Abe still remembers when Yankel took him to shul for Simchas Torah and he was given candy. As time went on Yankel's Parkinson's disease became progressive and he could not continue going to Shul independently.

In Sept. 1951 Abe started first grade at the Jewish Day School called Chofetz Chaim Day School on scholarship. We felt the day school would provide Abe with a good education, but Abe had difficulty that first year. We spoke Yiddish at home, and he struggled to learn English as well as Hebrew. During his first year at school he developed acute appendicitis and while he was recovering from surgery at Jewish Hospital, he developed measles that prolonged his hospital stay. Abe fell behind in school and repeated the first grade the next year. He continued at Chofetz Chaim through the sixth grade and then continued at Woodward Junior and Senior High School.

Aron went to nursery school and kindergarten at the JCC and then started first grade at Chofetz Chaim Jewish Day School on scholarship. He also struggled at school and repeated the first grade at Talmud Torah Day School, where he continued to struggle. The teacher at Talmud Torah wanted Aron to repeat the first grade again which I believed was not in his best interest. I transferred Aron to the public-school system, North Avondale Elementary School where he also continued to struggle. Aron was going to be held back again in public school, but I asked the teacher not to hold him back but to allow him to move on to the next grade. I felt it would make it difficult for his social development to be held back again! Fortunately in the sixth grade Aron had the opportunity to be transferred to Shield Elementary School, an alternative elementary school, which offered an experimental reading program. The school was in downtown Cincinnati so each day Aron took two buses each way to school. His teacher, Mrs. Fourt, provided a much better learning opportunity and he greatly improved academically. He went on to Woodward Junior and Senior High School starting in the seventh grade. In the ninth grade he was advanced to the academic track and took Advanced Placement American History in the eleventh grade.

I helped the children as much as possible in math, multiplication tables and even reading even though I struggled with English. *(Aron stated "Mom's tireless tenacity and faith in my potential made all the difference for my future!")*



Figure 133: 1955 Sara, Jacob, Aron and Abe Ross, Hutchins Ave, Cincinnati Ohio.
Aron and Phyllis Zuchowicki on porch.



Figure 134: 1955 Jacob and Sara Ross and Joe Simons, (Jacobs maternal first cousin) Cincinnati Ohio.
Aron Ross on porch.



Figure 135: 1955 Abe and Aron Ross, Cincinnati Ohio



Figure 136: 1955 Sara, Aron and Phyllis Zuchowicki, Cincinnati Ohio

As the years went on, we kept in contact with many of our relatives in the US who contacted us in the DP camp. Occasionally they would send us a few dollars, which we needed. As these relatives aged and their children did not know us, we lost touch with them. Yankel's maternal uncle, Archik (Aaron) (from Zelva), and his wife Malka (Mollie) (from Slonim) Simons and some of their children from Detroit helped us the most. When we arrived in Cincinnati, Uncle Archik and his oldest son, Morris, visited us that first year then Uncle Archick and his son Joe visited us the next year. Yankel, Abe and I were invited to Morris Simons daughter's wedding, Eleanor Simons married Mort Trotsky, in Detroit. Archik arranged for bus transportation and we stayed at one of the cousin's homes. It was a big beautiful wedding and we met Mollie and all of Yankel's cousins. Cousin Joe Simons continued to visit us and would take Abe and Aron out for rides in his car. Later Cousins Jean and George Fredson frequently visited us and occasionally cousin Yale Simons visited us. They went out of their way to stay in touch with us, which we greatly appreciated.

USA Citizenship: 1956

In 1956, five years from the time we immigrated, Yankel and I desperately wanted to become citizens so Abe and Aron would be citizens. We wanted to make sure that America was our children's home. Yankel and I took classes about American history and we knew the answers. During the citizenship process Yankel struggled to answer the questions due to his illness and obvious accent. The Judge began tormenting Yankel with more questions. I turned to and asked the Judge "why are you tormenting my husband, can't you see my husband is sick!" The Judge did respond to my concerns and we were sworn in and became citizens on June 25, 1956. With the naturalization process, we officially changed our name from Rosjanski to Ross, which was Yankel's request.



Figure 137: 1956/57 Sara and Jacob Ross, Cincinnati Ohio

**ORIGINAL
TO BE GIVEN TO
THE PERSON NATURALIZED**

No. **7699428**

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Petition No. 21129

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Date of birth July 5, 1909 *sex* Male
complexion dark *color of eyes* brown *color of hair* black *height* 5 feet 7 inches
weight 160 pounds *visible distinctive marks* Parkinson's disease
Marital status married *former nationality* Polish

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me

Jacob Ross
(Complete and true signature of holder)

United States of America
Southern District of Ohio ss.

Be it known, that at a term of the United States District Court of
the Southern District of Ohio
held pursuant to law at Cincinnati, Ohio
on JUN 25 1956 *the Court having found that*

Jacob Ross
then residing at 516 Hutchins Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio
intends to reside permanently in the United States (when so required by the
Naturalization laws of the United States), had in all other respects complied with
the applicable provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to be
admitted to citizenship, thereupon ordered that such person be and (s/he) was
admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 25th.
day of June *in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and*
fifty-six (1956) and of our Independence the one hundred
and eightieth

John D. Lyter,
Clerk of the United States District Court

By *Edwin B. Spies* Deputy Clerk.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

It is a violation of the U. S. Code (and punishable as such) to copy, print, photograph, or otherwise illegally use this certificate.

Figure 138: Certificate of Citizenship Jacob Ross June 25, 1956. Last name officially changed from Rosjanski to Ross.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ORIGINAL
TO BE GIVEN TO
THE PERSON NATURALIZED

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION

No. **7699429**

Relation No. 21126

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Date of birth May 15, 1913 sex Female
 complexion Fair color of eyes blue color of hair brown height 5 feet 3 inches
 weight 115 pounds visible distinctive marks none
 Marital status Married former nationality Polish

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.


Sara

Sara Ross
 (Complete and true signature of holder)

United States of America
 Southern District of Ohio ss:

Be it known, that at a term of the United States District Court of
 Southern District of Ohio
 held pursuant to law at Cincinnati, Ohio
 on JUN 25 1956 the Court having found that
Sara Ross
 then residing at 516 Dutchman Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio
 intends to reside permanently in the United States (when so required by the
 Naturalization Laws of the United States), had in all other respects complied with
 the applicable provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to be
 admitted to citizenship, thereupon ordered that such person be and (she was
 admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 25th
 day of JUNE in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and
fifty-six (1956) and of our Independence the one hundred
 and eightieth

John D. Lyter,
 Clerk of the United States District Court

By Edwin B. Spies Deputy Clerk.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

It is a violation of the U. S. Code (and
 punishable as such) to copy, print, photograph,
 or otherwise illegally use this certificate.

Figure 139: Certificate of citizenship Sara Ross June 25, 1956

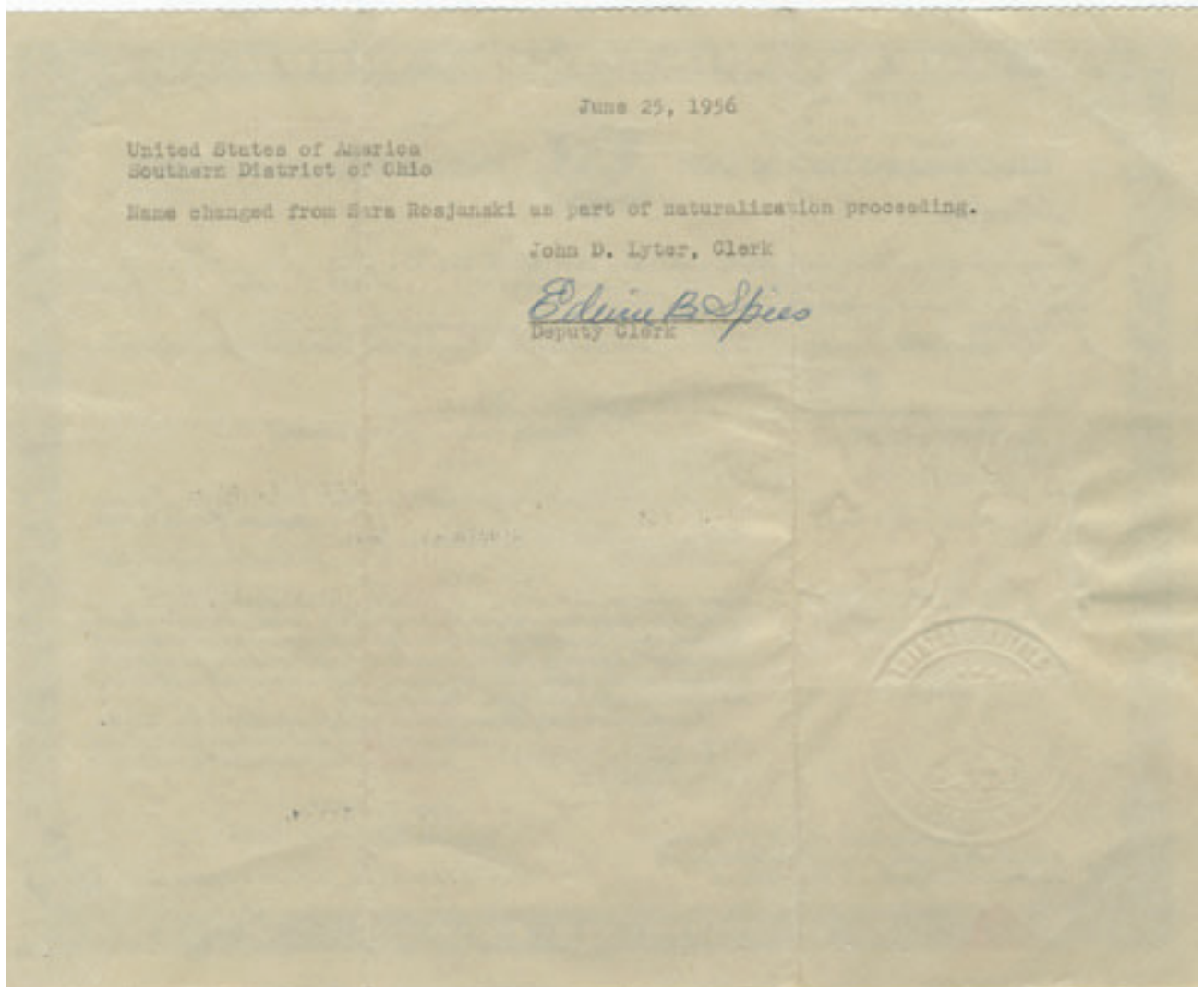


Figure 140: *Name change from Rosjanski to Ross*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CERTIFICATE OF

CITIZENSHIP

No. **A-293809**

Application No. **A7 996 712**

•ORIGINAL•

Personal description of holder as of date of issuance of this certificate: Sex **Male** date of birth **September 5, 1945**
 country of birth **Poland** complexion **Medium** color of eyes **Brown** color of hair **Brown**
 height **4** feet **8** inches weight **100** pounds visible distinctive marks **None**
 Marital status **Single**

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

Abraham Ross
 (Complete and true signature of holder)

Be it known that **ABRAHAM ROSS**
 now residing at **3705 Beatrice Street, Cincinnati, Ohio**
 having applied to the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization for a certificate of
 citizenship pursuant to Section 344 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, having proved to
 the satisfaction of the Commissioner that (s)he is now a citizen of the United States of America, became
 a citizen thereof on **June 25, 1956** and is now in the United States.

And therefore, in pursuance of the authority contained in Section 344 of the Immigration
 and Nationality Act, this certificate of citizenship is issued this **Twenty-eighth**
 day of **January** in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred
 and **Fifty-seven** and of our Independence the
 one hundred and **Eighty-first** and the seal of the Department
 of Justice affixed pursuant to statute.

Seal

IT IS A VIOLATION OF THE U. S. CODE (480) PUNISHABLE AS SWORN TO
 COPY, PRINT, PHOTOGRAPH, OR OTHERWISE ILLEGALLY USE THIS CERTIFICATE.

J. J. Swaney
 Consul signer

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Figure 141: Certificate of Citizenship Abraham Ross June 25, 1956

Form N-550 (REV. 12-24-52)

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CERTIFICATE OF CITIZENSHIP

No. **A-293810**

Application No. **87 996 713**

ORIGINAL

Personal description of holder of date of issuance of this certificate Sec. **Male** *date of birth* **July 27, 1948**
country of birth **Austria** *complexion* **Medium** *color of eyes* **Brown** *color of hair* **Brown**
height **5** *feet* **5** *inches* **90** *pounds* **90** *visible distinctive marks* **None**
Marital status **Single**

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

Aron Ross
(Complete and true signature of holder)

Best known that **ARON ROSS**
now residing at **3705 Beatrice Street, Cincinnati, Ohio**
having applied to the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization for a certificate of citizenship pursuant to Section 341 of the Immigration and Nationality Act having provided the satisfaction of the Commissioner that he is now a citizen of the United States of America, became a citizen thereof on **June 25, 1956** *and is now in the United States.*

Noted Therefore, in pursuance of the authority contained in Section 341 of the Immigration and Nationality Act this certificate of citizenship is issued this **Twenty-eighth**
day of **January** *in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred*
and **Fifty-seven** *and of our Independence the*
one hundred and **Eighty-first** *and the seal of the Department of Justice affixed pursuant to statute.*

Seal

IT IS A VIOLATION OF THE U. S. CODE (AND PUNISHABLE AS SUCH) TO COPY, PRINT, PHOTOGRAPH OR OTHERWISE ILLEGALLY USE THIS CERTIFICATE.

J. S. [Signature]
 Commissioner

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Figure 142: Certificate of Citizenship Aron Ross June 25, 1956

German restitution and disability pension application process

I must clearly state that I did not want to rely on the Jewish Family Service for financial aid, but we had no choice during this difficult time, for which I am thankful. All I wanted was German restitution for Yankel and myself and a German pension for Yankel's total disability. In 1949 in Linz, Austria the Joint Distribution Committee officials in DP Camp Ebelsberg and in Asten, Austria told us that Yankel would be eligible for a pension from the German government due to his total disability caused by the German persecution, so we applied! In Austria, many physicians diagnosed Yankel having Parkinson's disease caused by Typhus Encephalitis that occurred during our German persecution in the winter of 1943-44 and he was certified as disabled.

From the time we arrived in America we continued the process of applying for German restitution for Yankel and myself and a disability pension for Yankel. The Germans had murdered our families, destroyed and ruined our lives and Yankel was totally disabled. Yankel deserved a disability pension and the Germans owed us financial support!! I became an around the clock caregiver to Yankel, so I could not work! While other Holocaust survivors were working and receiving restitution and pensions our application lingered for years and it tormented me!!! In 1951 and February 12, 1952, the Jewish family service of Cincinnati helped us write letters to the American Federation of Jews from

Central Europe in New York City requesting more information for Yankel's total disability pension. Subsequently many letters and documents were provided. In 1955 the United Restitution Organization (URO) was given power of attorney to help with our restitution and Yankel's disability application. Many physician certificates from Austria and Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati stated he had severe Parkinson's from Typhus encephalitis. Witnesses included Efrain (Foyka) Gelman (from Zelva); Chaim Polonsky (from Kossov); Abvaham and Dr. Cheslawa Orlinski (from Slonim); Morris Salutsky (Slutsky)(from Zelva); Cina Wolk and her daughters Nhome Wolk Gershenovitchand, Ryvka Wolk (forest), Motke and Solem Krafshuk, Shichum Vtikim, Dr. Koslovski (from Ivatsevichi). They all stated that Yankel was healthy before the war and became ill during the war. Medical exams by the German consulate's physicians in Cincinnati and other specialists in Cincinnati verified his illness.

The German's restitution authorities in Trier and the URO did 'not' act adequately on our behalf and years of delay after delay occurred. Over the years we asked for a speedy resolution due to Yankel's severe health condition and our desperate financial hardship and still no response. The Germans through the URO continued to ask for the same historical information and documentation over and over again. More and more duplicate medical documentation was provided. It seemed neither the Germans nor the URO read our detailed documents, which were certified over and over again. The URO gave us inadequate responses to our question which was more than upsetting! In 1956 we also applied to the Claims Conference Committee in NYC for help, with no response. I meet with the German consulate from Cleveland, Ohio in Cincinnati "many times" and I was very emotional especially when Yankel went with me. I screamed at the German consulate "Can't you see that Yankel is totally disabled and your people caused it!!!!!" They asked me to calm down, but how could I?

In 1958, Yankel finally received a small one-time payment from Germany for loss of liberty (restitution) and I received the same small payment for loss of liberty in 1960. Yankel's application for his total disability pension or any payment for my 24-hour, seven-day per week, single-handed care, had no resolution. In or about 1960 my brother took care of Yankel and children and I took a bus by myself to Cleveland to meet with the German consulate and again emotionally pleaded for Yankel's disability pension. I was angry and upset and I told him I would not accept any more delays! The German consulate promised to help and expedite our claim and he asked me to calm down. I was very angry at all the excuses, time delay, my husband's illness, my children's needs and our and my financial situation. I was angry with everyone including the Jewish family service that was trying to help us. I saw other refugees who could work get pensions and my husband who was totally disabled, and we were suffering financially, emotionally and physically. It took many years of applications, appeals, physician evaluations and witness reports with the assistance of the Cincinnati Jewish family service and the New York office of the United Restitution Organization (URO) and German consulate in Cleveland, Ohio to make some headway. The German consulate ultimately intervened on our behalf and Yankel finally received a very small German pension in 1962 for his total disability. He received \$80.00/month pension that was not enough for us to live on, but we had to make do. We stopped receiving public financial assistance and health care in 1962. We could not afford to purchase health care insurance which was a problem.

— **TO CONFIRM MY MOTHER'S TESTIMONY** —

I reviewed my parent's Jewish Family Service file that contained my parent's restitution and my father's German Pension application documents. The documents are disturbing and provide a clearer understanding of why my parents were so angry and upset over the unbearable German restitution and pension process.

In 1955 the United Restitution Organization, URO, was given power of attorney for my parents' claims process. The URO lawyers worked as a legal aid society to help survivors to apply for restitution and compensation for a fee. The URO lack of actions from 1955 to 1961 prolonged our catastrophic financial hardship and emotional pain for years. My mother did everything she could to obtain a disability pension for my fathers including many visits to the German consulate. The German consulate ultimately intervened based on my mother's angry pleadings. In 1961 the German consulate forced the URO to file the appropriate critical affidavit, that was not done up to that time. URO ultimately admitted that this critical affidavit was "not" previously drafted! The German consulate also asked the German court for preference regarding my fathers' total disability claim. My parents were again victims not only of the

German Restitution authorities but also their supposed advocates, the URO. My father finally received a meager pension, “not adequate means of support”, in 1962. My father passed away from his horrific Parkinson’s disease in 1965 and this pension ended. My mother demanded compensation from Germany for her lost ability to work, as she cared for my father 24/7, which was nearly an impossible task, physically and emotionally. She never received any compensation.²¹²

Life After 1956

In 1956 we became citizens and began receiving support from Hamilton County Welfare Department at subsistence levels. We appreciated the support although it was difficult to survive, almost impossible, at poverty levels. Life became more difficult each day, financially, emotionally and physically caring for Yankel. The Jewish Family service tried to help. In or about 1958 Abe and Aron went to Camp Livingston, a Jewish overnight Camp, on community support. I had my varicose veins operated on and Yankel stayed in a chronic care facility, Sheltering Oaks, adjacent to Jewish Hospital for a few weeks. It was a terrible experience for Yankel due to inadequate and poor nursing health care. As an example, his meals were served to him, but he was left in front of this meal tray for hours without assistance and he could not move adequately due to his Parkinson’s disease. When he could he eventually walked out of the facility, just to get out, even though he needed care. He was found and he returned home where I cared for him.

As the years went on, Yankel’s Parkinson’s disease became progressively worse and Yankel’s Parkinson’s medication made no significant improvement. I became a constant full-time caregiver, all day and all night for 14 years until Yankel passed away from his devastating form of Parkinson’s disease in 1965. I provided Yankel an exercise routine each day to maintain mobility (and prevent contractures). I dressed and undressed him. I shaved, bathed and helped feed him. He needed help getting up from a chair and sitting down. I turned Yankel multiple times from side to side each and every night for his comfort and to avoid bedsores. Yankel had a horrible illness and fate. I helped Yankel as best as I could to my full ability!! This illness affected all of us.

Some of my friends encouraged me to place Yankel into a chronic care facility. I could not and would not!! I did my best and devoted all my emotional and physical energy to help Yankel and my children. Yankel’s health and our financial condition impacted the entire family. Some of our Holocaust survivor friends took up a collection for us but I would not accept their money! I only wanted restitution and a pension from Germany!! They owed us!!!

212 Abraham Ross review of Jewish Family Service records, German Restitution and Pension documents

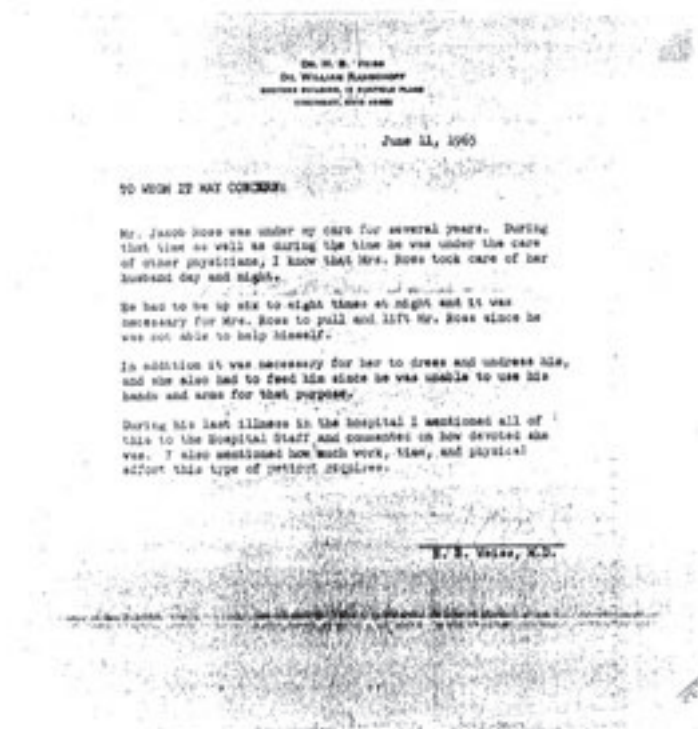


Figure 143: *H.B. Weiss MD statement 1965*



Figure 144: 1962/63 Rear: (L) Aaron and Sara Zuchowicki (R) Sara and Jacob Ross.
Front: (L) Phyllis Zuchowicki, (C) Abe, (R) Aron Ross, 1115 Rossmore Ave., Cincinnati Ohio



Figure 145: 1963/64 (L to R) Abe, Sara, Jacob and Aron Ross, 1115 Rossmore Ave. Cincinnati Ohio



Figure 146: 1963/64 (L to R) Aron, Sara, Jacob and Abe Ross, 1115 Rossmore Ave., Cincinnati Ohio

We lived in a one-bedroom, one bath apartment and obtained our first party line (shared line) telephone in the late 1950's. In the early 1960's I purchased a window air conditioner, which Yankel very much needed. Cincinnati summers were hot and very humid.

Abe and Aron both had Bar Mitzvahs and the celebration was a Kiddush luncheon at the "Schul" that I prepared. I made Gefilte fish, chopped herring, cakes and "Mandelbrot" (mandel bread). For my children's birthdays, I would bake a sponge cake.

For "Shabbos" (Sabbath) I tried to make it special on a limited budget and made every penny count. I make an Eastern European Friday night dinner and baked homemade challah, chicken soup with homemade "lokshen" (noodles) or matzo "knadlach" (matzo balls); homemade parave "lokshen kugel" (noodle kugel) or a "kartoffel" (potato) kugel; chicken, vegetables and baked a honey cake as money allowed. I also tried to make "yontive" (holidays) special. For Pesach (Passover) I made homemade gefilte fish, chicken soup with matzo "knadlach" (balls), "kartoffel" (potato) kugel, charoset, borschet (red beet soup), Pesach bagels and Pesach sponge cake. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipper I would bake a honey cake and "Tzimmes" (sweet stew of carrot, sweet potatoes and prunes). For Shavuot, I made homemade "blintzes". For Chanukah, I made latkes. For Purim, I made homemade "hamenentaschen" cookies and homemade "kreplach" (noodle dumplings filled with meat) with chicken soup or pan-fried. On Simchat Torah I made "kreplach."

Abe, Aron and Phyllis went to Woodward High School. Yankel went to Abe's Woodward High School graduation in June 1964 with assistance. Yankel suffered so many years from his horrific disabling Parkinson's disease and passed away from his illness on May 6, 1965; 4 Iyar; at Jewish Hospital and was buried in Love Brothers cemetery in Price Hill section of Cincinnati. Even though we had very little extra funds I paid for a large memorial stone so my children would remember!!! Our family members who died in the Holocaust had no burial site or memorial stone; my husband deserved one. Yankel's German pension ended when he passed away and I applied for a widow's pension and loss of ability to work during the time I cared for Yankel. My application was turned down!



Figure 147: *Jacob Ross, Love Brothers cemetery, Cincinnati Ohio (Price Hill)*

After Yankel passed away I worked as a sewing machine operator in a clothing factory for many years. The working conditions were not good and anti-Semitism was present especially when Israel was in the news. When the sewing industry declined, I took a job as a personal aid for an elderly Jewish woman in the Cincinnati Jewish nursing home. To supplement my income I continued to perform alterations for some customers from our apartment. We could not afford to purchase health insurance and luckily, we had no large health bills.

From the time we arrived in America we encouraged our children's educational efforts which gave them the opportunity to succeed. Abe and Aron found jobs in the summer and on the weekends in high school and college. I told Abe when he was looking for a job in college either you go to school or you get a job, you cannot do both. I helped as much as I could and saved every penny so they could get an education and I did not spend anything for myself. Abe lived at home and went to the University of Cincinnati by bus or found a ride. Abe then went to medical school at the University of Cincinnati and lived at home for two years and then married Nancy Schwartz in 1970 and completed his education in Medicine. He continued his training in Internal Medicine then Anesthesia and became an Anesthesiologist. Aron lived at home and started at the University of Cincinnati and married Arlene Chudnoff in college. Aron and Arlene took out loans and Aron transferred to Miami of Ohio. He became a teacher then obtained his master's degree and principal certificate at night school and then went on for his PhD. This allowed him to become a principal and then a school administrator. My children gave me much "nachas" (happiness and joy) and I am so proud of their accomplishments.



Figure 148: (L to R) Phyllis Zuchowicki, Sara Ross, Abe and Nancy Ross, Arlene and Aron Ross, (sitting L to R) Aron Zuchowicki, Sara Zuchowicki, Abe and Nancy's wedding, Westchester N.Y. June 21, 1970.

We were always very close, as close as one family, to my brother, Aron, and sister in law, Sara and niece, Phyllis. Aron and Sara were like a second set of parents to Abe and Aron and the same for Phyllis for Yankel and I. Abe and Aron called my brother "Jadge" (uncle in? Russian) and my sister-in-law "Chotch" (aunt in? Russian) and Phyllis called me "Tante" (aunt in Yiddish). In the late 1950's to the 1970's we lived across from each other in a one-bedroom, one bath apartment at 1115 Rossmore Ave. in the Bond Hill section of Cincinnati. Phyllis went to college at Ohio State and

married Mike Babich. My brother worked as a laborer in Cincinnati because he did not have a formal education in America. He was an unusually skilled craftsman that could repair or replace almost anything. His second full time job was maintaining properties they owned. Sara went to night school and worked as a nurse then as an administrator in a nursing home. Sara and Aron with partners ultimately built and operated their own nursing home in Cincinnati where Sara was the Administrator.

In July 1981, I visited Israel during the first international reunion of Holocaust Survivors with Abe and my brother Aron and my sister-in-law Sara. It was very exciting, and Israel honored us, the Survivors, at the Western Wall and Yad Vashem. I met my sister-in-law's brother, Chaim Polonski and his wife Tzepporah and their four children. I had not seen Chaim since the late 1940's in Austria when he immigrated to Israel. In Israel, I also met my first cousin Avraham Orlinski and his second wife. Avraham was born in Slonim and educated as an engineer in Warsaw. Avraham also survived the Shoah in the Volche Nory and Pinsk Forest with his first wife, Cheslava, a pediatrician. He arranged for us to meet other survivors from our area in Poland in his home in Halon, Israel. It was a special meeting of survivors that I have not seen since the time of the Shoah. One was a Jewish woman from Byten that was with us in the Volche Nory Forest. Her name was Lyuba (Abramovich) and her father played during my wedding in 1938. She was a good actress performing in plays in Byten. She testified as a witness during the trial of a German Officer in Germany (Regional Kommissar Gerhardt Erren in 1972).

My brother passed away in Cincinnati on July 6, 1982; 15 Thamus, and was buried in Love Brothers Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio. When my brother passed away, I stayed very close to my sister-in-law Sara. She worked long hours so I would cook and deliver a Shabbos dinner every Friday to her apartment. Phyllis and Mike moved to Denver and had two children, Melissa and Aaron. Aaron was named after my brother. Aron and Arlene had two children, Jackie and Josh. Jackie was named after Yankel, Jacob. Abe and Nancy moved to Allentown, PA and had two children, David and Debra. Sara moved to Denver in the late 1990's when I moved to Allentown. My sister-in-law Sara passed away on June 25, 2005; 21 Sivan, in Denver, Colorado and was buried in Love Brothers Cemetery next to my brother.



Figure 149: (L to R) Sara Polonski Zuchowicki, Aron Zuchowicki, Tzepporah Polonski, Chaim Polonski, Sara Ross, Mayer Polonski, (sitting) Hannah Polonski, Tzur Moshe Israel, July, 1981



Figure 150: *Sara Ross, Aron Zuchowicki, Avraham Orlinski(L-R), Israel 1981*



Figure 151: *Sara Zuchowicki and Sara Ross (L-R), 1998, Columbus, Ohio*



Figure 152: Aron and Sara Zuchowicki, Love Brothers cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio (Price Hill)

My children have given me four wonderful grandchildren, Jacqueline, Joshua, David and Debra. I had so much “nachas” (joy and delight) watching my children and grandchildren grow up to become beautiful, successful and productive American citizens. I spent as much time as I could with my grandchildren, and they became my life. Jackie became a psychologist with a master’s degree; Josh became a pediatrician and a pediatric emergency doctor; David became an orthodontist; and Debra became a high school guidance counselor with a Master’s degree. I was also blessed to see my oldest granddaughter, Jackie, get married to a physician, James Young; and even see and hold one great granddaughter, Sydney Hannah Young. Her middle name was in honor of my middle sister, Chanah.



Figure 153: *(L to R) Arlene Ross, Aron Ross, Jackie Ross, Abe Ross, Sara Ross, Nancy Ross, (front: L to R) Debra Ross, David Ross, Joshua Ross, 1980, Ohio*



Figure 154: *(L to R) Debra Ross, David Ross, Sara Ross, Joshua Ross, Sydney Channah Young, Jackie Ross Young, USHMM 10 year celebration, Washington, DC, 2003*



Figure 155: *Sara Ross, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1988*

Reflections

I always remembered what the American consulate in Linz, Austria in 1950 asked Yankel and I during our American immigration interview “How could we help America?” I responded by saying our children will help America and they have indeed given back to the country that took us in. Now, I say as well, my grandchildren will also help and give back to America as productive first-generation Americans.

Before the war we were all very “frum” (very religious, orthodox). We had kosher homes, kept Shabbas and a Jewish life. My parents exemplified good and righteous Jews that “davened” (worshipped) daily and treated Jews and non-Jews with respect and helped anyone in need. I will always remember my father’s last words in the ghetto before we escaped to the forest and our family was slaughtered in August 1942, – “Eat and drink, there is nothing left in this world!!” I always asked myself and others “All those innocent children and all those holy, righteous and pious Jews who believed and prayed to G-d each day — Where was G-d??” Make no mistake, I firmly believe in the beauty of a Jewish life and in good people.

Who could have imagined the brightness of children, grandchildren and a great grandchild during the dark days of the Shoah? It is a miracle that any member of our family survived! Now I am the “Letste Eides” (Last Witness) to document the history of our family with the horror and brutality of the Shoah and the rebirth of our family out of the ashes. My life was not about personal needs or money, but about my children, grandchildren and the care of my beloved husband. I always say, thank G-d; we brought our children to America! I am happy that this is my place of life and freedom and I never complained!!

After the war I felt compelled to continually and openly tell everyone about our story! I spoke so the world would remember. Some would listen and understand, and others would not want to listen like my “mekhutonim” (Aron’s mother in-law) who would say “don’t spoil my day!” People cannot imagine or believe what we went through! I surely could never forget!

I have been asked how did I survive? I was young, strong, had the will to resist and not give up. I was well oriented in the forest, ran fast on raids but mostly I was fortunate and lucky. During the years in the Ghetto and the forest I did not think I would survive, if not today then tomorrow, but when you hear the “coil” (bullet) you run, and I did survive to tell my story – “The Last Witness.” Now, it is my children and grandchildren’s place to remember and tell our story, so the world will not forget! Thank G-d we are in the United States ... and ... G-d Bless America!

Remember, Gedank, Zachor and tell our story!

Abe, you write a book!



Figure 156: (Back: L to R) Mike Babich, David Ross, Abe Ross, Aron Ross, Anita Ross, James Young, Melissa Babich, (Center: L to R) Phyllis Zuchowicki Babich, Jackie and Sydney Young, Sara Ross, Jean Simons Fredson, Nancy Ross, (Front: R to L) Aaron Babich, Debra Ross, Joshua Ross, Sara Ross 90th Birthday Celebration Allentown, PA, 2003



Figure 157: Sara Ross's 90th Birthday Celebration, (L to R) Melissa Babish, David Ross, Debra Ross, Sara Ross, Joshua Ross, Jackie Ross Young, Aaron Babich, Allentown, PA, 2003.

CHAPTER XII

EPILOGUE: A CELEBRATION OF JEWISH LIFE

My mother moved from Cincinnati, Ohio to Allentown, PA at the age of 85. Her mind was very sharp, and she lived independently until the age of 90 when she developed lung cancer even though she never smoked. The next two years were very difficult due to her declining health but she continued to live in her home with assistance. Sara Ross passed away in Allentown, Pennsylvania on December 22, 2005; 21 Kislev, at the age of 92 and was buried next to my father in Love Brothers cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Figure 158: Sara Ross, Love Brothers cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio (Price Hill)

My mother left more than a testimony and biography. She provided many life lessons of courage and strength to resist adversity, to rise above inhumanity and despair and provide inspiration for our lives. She left a roadmap of life, a legacy of unyielding devotion, sacrifice and love of my father and her family. My father was disabled, and my mother became a single-handed full-time (24/7) physical and emotional caregiver with unyielding devotion and personal sacrifice for fourteen years that provided no personal life for herself! My mother's care of my father was beyond anyone's measure and capacity, a true Woman of Valor!

What our four survivors lived thru, physically and emotionally, during and after the Shoah goes beyond my capacity to fully comprehend. We must remember where they came from and those that were left behind, a Jewish cemetery within the ghettos and forest. We must keep their story of physical and emotional devastation and active armed resistance alive by telling their story, so the next generations, do not forget!

Our four survivors went from devastation to rebirth and built a family legacy of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, niece's and nephew's.

A celebration of Jewish life – grandchildren and great grandchildren ...

- Jackie Ross married James Young on June 7, 1998 and have two children
 - Sydney Hannah Young born April 26, 2001
 - Zoe Chaya Young born June 6, 2004
- Joshua Ross married Wonah Kim on January 22, 2005 and have two children
 - Samuel Taejin Ross born August 6, 2006
 - Jayden Taewoo Ross born March 11, 2008
- Debra Ross married Seth Kozak on September 2, 2007 and have two children
 - Sarah Madison Kozak born November 2, 2010
 - Ryan Mathew Kozak born September 5, 2013
- David Ross married Karli Drobny on July 12, 2008 and has two children
 - Stella Paige Ross born March 14, 2011
 - Jacob Mason Ross born August 1, 2013
- Aaron Babich married Jamie Goodman on October 14, 2013 and have a son
 - Alexander Stanley Babich born February 28, 2015
- Melissa Babich

CHAPTER XIII

APPENDIX

A. Family Martyrs During the Shoah

During the Shoah there was no communication with other relatives in different towns. My mother's testimony provided the enclosed family trees (D) and towns where we had relatives. I reviewed the Yizkor books from these towns and I summarized my findings of family martyrs. I kept to the style of the memorial book. I also searched family members in Yad Vashem central database of Shoah victims pages of testimony. We had other relatives that perished that are not identified.

1. Zelva (Zelwa) – (Rosjanski and Zlotnicki family martyrs)

Yankel (Jacob) Rosjanski was born and grew up in Zelva. In 1938 he married Sara Zuchowicki and moved to Ivatsevichi, Poland. When WWII broke out in 1939 Yankel's parents, Dusche Zlotnicki Rosjanski and Aron Rosjanski, with his younger sister, Shayna Chaya Rosjanski (lived at home) lived in Zelva, Poland. Yankel's older Sister, Chanah Laya, and husband had 2 boys and a girl and they lived outside of Volkovysk, Poland. Volkovisk is 14 miles from Zelva and Zelva is 48.5 miles from Ivatsevichi.

The Zelva Memorial book²¹³ mentions Rosjanski (Yankel's family) on p.72 as victims. Three Zlotnitzky (Zlotnicki) brothers are mentioned on p.71 (most likely Yankel's maternal cousins) as victims. The three Zlotnitzky brothers were again mentioned in the Volkovisk Memorial book – they tried to escape and were caught and shot.²¹⁴ Yankel's parents and sisters and family were all killed in Zelva, Volkovisk or Treblinka concentration (death) camp with so, so many other Rosjanski and Zlotnicki relatives!!

—THE ZELVA MEMORIAL BOOK—(SUMMARY)²¹⁵

Zelva was a vibrant Jewish town in Poland (between the wars) and the Jewish community existed for hundreds of years. The Zionist movement dominated the Jewish community and the Tarbut School (Yankel Rosjanski attended) was founded in approximately 1920, which grew the Zionists spirit and Aliyah. There were many synagogues in the Jewish neighborhood, as well as a Mikvah (ritual bath) for purification, soccer fields, ice-skating, other sports, firehouse, hydrant, and a fireman's orchestra and police station. A bus ran from Zelva to Volkovysk and one gas station was in Zelva. The residents of the town were part Jewish and part Christian farmers. There were three schools in Zelva: the Tarbut and its library, the Yavneh School (religious) and the General School. Zelva had storekeepers and merchants as well as manufacturing mills on the Zelvianka River. Merchants from Warsaw and Germany would come to the large monthly Zelva fairs that established international trade—everything centered around the fair. The railroad went through the town and the Zelvianka River connected to the larger river, the Neman, on which lumber was transported.

213 Zelva Memorial Book, Yerachmiel Moorstein (1984); English Translation, Jacob Berger, 1992,

214 Zelva Memorial Book, Yerachmiel Moorstein (1984); English Translation, Jacob Berger, 1992, p.114-115 and Volkovisk Memorial Books (1957)

215 Zelva Memorial Book, Yerachmiel Moorstein, 1984, English translation, Jacob Berger, 1992 (summary)

Russia invaded the Polish town in Sept. 1939 as WWII broke out. The population was 1,800 and with the influx of refugees the population reached 7,000. The laws changed and the rich, well to do families were arrested and sent to Siberia.

Germany invaded in June 22, 1941. The city was bombed, the houses were burned and 80 (or 300) victims died. Three days (June 25 or 26) after the occupation the Gestapo came in and ordered all the Jewish men to register with the authorities which included Ephraim (Foyka) Gelman (cousin of Yankel Rosjanski). Forty of the town's Jewish intelligentsia including teachers, accountants, rabbis and scholars were taken in a transport and shot to death in the nearby Bereshko Forest in July 1941. Zelva did not have a Judenrat. Polish youths were deputized and Polish police assisted the Germans. Jewish hangings and shootings occurred day to day and the bodies were left hanging for three days. Seven butchers were caught on suspicion of smuggling meat and all the Jews and the rest of the residents were compelled to watch as they were hung in the marketplace. It was impossible to obtain a piece of bread and starvation began to squeeze them. Some Jews committed suicide. Many Jews were forced to perform hard labor in road construction.

In 1941 some Jews saved themselves by escaping to Russia. Very few Jews escaped to the forest that included Ephraim Gelman, Moshe Slutsky, Katriel Slutsky, Leizer Lantzevitzky and Nathan Chana. Moshe Slutsky escaped from the ghetto to the partisans where he fought Germans, blowing up trains and rail lines. Ephraim and Alta Gelman and their two children²¹⁶ escaped to the forests between Dereczin and Zhitel and survived for the next two years with the Russian Partisans, Bulak's command. Bulak's Partisans actively fought the Germans, especially sabotage of railway lines, trains and railway bridges. Eighty percent of the Partisan in his group perished over the two years (1942-44). In July 14, 1944 they were liberated by the Red Army.

In Zelva on November 2, 1942 the SS troops came from Volkovysk where they rounded up the Jews. They were taken by cattle cars to the crowded and filthy barns/stables – Volkovysk bunkers (ghetto).

On November 20, 1942, after the Succoth holiday, all of the remaining Jews living in the surrounding villages of Volkovysk were deported to the ghetto – the stockade and horse stables of the Volkovysk bunkers. In Volkovysk, the Jews were imprisoned in the camps of the armory in the cold, in hunger, and in unsanitary conditions. On November 28 they began taking Jews by freight train to the ovens (gas chambers and crematoria) of Treblinka. With the active participation of the Christian residents of the city, expulsion of the Jews was accompanied by a loud cry of 'Hurrah'.²¹⁷

216 Gelman family were cousins of Yankel Rosjanski. They survived and were in the same Linz Austria DP camp with Sara and Yankel Rosjanski. They immigrated to New Jersey.

217 Zelva Memorial Book, Mooostein, 1984, English translation – Jacob Berger, 1992 (summary)



Figure 159: Zelva-WWII memorial. Former Jewish cemetery is now a soccer field, 6/2018

2. Volkovysk (Wolkowysk) – (Yankel Rosjanski sister and family martyrs)

—THE VOLKOVYSK YIZKOR (MEMORIAL) BOOK—(SUMMARY)²¹⁸—

On November 2, 1942 the Jews of Zelva were herded together in freight cars, and brought to the bunkers of Volkovisk (as well as from Ruzshinoi²¹⁹). The bunkers or dugouts were made by the Russian prisoners. The trenches were dug deep into the ground with roofs only slightly above the surface. The roofs consisted of boards with a few small windows. The bunkers were 3 m. deep and about 50 m. long 10 m. wide. The camp was divided into sections, each containing several bunkers, and each section surrounded by barb wire. Encircling the entire camp were three parallel lines of barb wire fences. Two small wells provided sufficient water for drinking, but not washing. The Jews of the surrounding villages, including Zelva and Ruzhinoy were brought to the bunkers. In all, there were 20,000 Jews from the surrounding small villages and from Volkovisk. The bunkers were dreadful. The daily food ration consisted of 170 g of bread and one liter of soup and at times there was no ration. Death took its toll, and there was an organized Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society) that placed the bodies in common graves. Five Jewish physicians organized medical care as much as possible. The stench was beyond description. Towards the end of November, (28) 1942, it was cold with heavy snow fall and the Jews of Zelva, Volkovisk, and Ruzhany were led to freight trains. In a short time 18,000 were taken to the gas chambers of Treblinka. In January 1943 the last train transport from Volkovisk went to Auschwitz.²²⁰

218 Volkovisker Yizkor Book, Meir Sokolowsky, 1949 (summary) Volkovisker Yizkor Book, Meir Sokolowsky, 1949

219 Sara Rosjanski uncle, aunt and cousins (Orlinski) lived in Ruzshinoi

220 Volkovisker Yizkor Book, Meir Sokolowsky, 1949, p.949



Figure 160: *Volkovysk in area of Ghetto and stables/bunkers, 6/2018*



Figure 161: *Volkovysk Jewish victims Memorial, 6/2018*



Figure 162: *Volkovysk Russian Memorial, 6/2018*

3. Ruzhany (Rozana, Rozhinoy, Ruzshinoi, Ruzshinoi) – (Orlinski family martyrs)

The Memorial book of Ruzhany includes the Orlinski family. Ruzhany is 21 miles from Ivatsevichi where Sara Rosjanski's and Aron Zuchowicki maternal uncle, Hazkal Orlinski, and cousins lived. In November 1942 Sara Rosjanski walked from the Volche Nory forest towards Ruzhany in hopes of finding family assistance because of the Russian partisan antisemitism and deprivation in the forest. On the outskirts of Ruzhany she was told that the ghetto was closed and all of the Jews were already killed or removed and Sara rapidly returned to the Volche Nory forest.

On November 2, 1942 the Jews of Ruzhany (ghetto) were moved to the horrific Volkovysk bunkers (ghetto) to join the Jews from Zelva and Volkovysk (Yankel's family).²²¹ The Orlinski family was most likely killed in Ruzhany, Volkovysk or the Treblinka concentration (death) camp.

—THE ROZANA (RUZHANY; ROZHINOY, RUZSHINOI -YIDDISH) MEMORIAL BOOK²²² (SUMMARY)—
The German occupation occurred in 1941 and they created various decrees. They established a Judenrat and the Judenrat appointed Jewish policeman to carry out German decrees which included forced labor, paving roads and menial tasks for which they received a meager piece of bread. They forced the Jews to fasten a yellow band on their clothing. It was forbidden for a Jew to walk on the sidewalk and every Jew had to remove his hat before a German. The Germans tormented the Jews with beatings and imprisoned apparent Communists. Within 10 days of their arrival they killed 15 Jewish city notables and closed the Jewish schools. Only a small number of Jews in 1941 endangered themselves to attend the Synagogue. A non-gated Ghetto was established where thousands of Jews including refugees had to live within a small number of houses. Jewish artisans could work and receive some food. In 1942 Jews from Slonim were

²²¹ Rozana: Memorial Book to the Jewish Community; Mayer Sokolowsky, 1957; Ruzhany Translated

²²² Rozana: Memorial Book to the Jewish Community; Mayer Sokolowsky, 1957; Ruzhany Translated, p.219-313

murdered and one German said "...Flee, oh Jews, hide in hiding places and save yourself." Some did prepare hiding places.

The terrible day of November 2, 1942 arrived. At dawn, the Judenrat was informed that the 20,000 Jews must gather and must take a bundle of clothing and the bundles were placed in a wagon that come from farmers. The children were transported in a separate wagon. The hands of the children were pulled by force from the hands of their parents. Babies were taken by force from the arms of their mothers who were caring for them and the Germans tossed the children onto the wagon. The adults walked.

The caravan moved along a dirt road for 50 Km. that lead from Ruzhany to Volkovisk that took two days. Immediately as they moved out a lady who was unable to keep up was shot. The armed Germans rode on horses and whoever could not keep up on the brisk walk was shot on the spot. Neither food nor water was given to them. It was an unbearable hot day for November and some children jumped from the wagon in an attempt to moisten their dry lips when they saw a river. The Germans mowed the children down with machine gun. The babies particularly suffered and cried bitterly. They cried from hunger and thirst and the parents were not given the opportunity to feed them or give them something to drink. The screaming and fainting were for not. The Heavens were mute, and the world was all-silent. The Germans behaved as wild beast and shot mercilessly at the smallest infraction. Along the way a Polish policeman shouted to them—"Escape! They are taking you to slaughter!" We did not believe him. We reached Podroisk towards evening. We stopped and spent the night on the street. Here they were given the one and only chance for mothers to nurse their children. A slice of bread was distributed to each person. The next day they continued the terrifying journey until they reached Volkovisk (ghetto) bunkers. (Yankel Rosjanski's family were most likely in the Volkovisk bunkers.)

BUNKERS IN VOLKOVISK—

Heart rendering weeping shook up the air of the earth (in the Ruzhany Bunkers within the camp of bunkers in Volkovisk). The Germans made the young and old stand together for the entire day without food. Their appearance was terrifying, and their suffering was immeasurable. The Germans brought a wagon full of potatoes to the bunker camp. Many stormed the wagon in order to grab a raw potato. The Germans shot them, and the entire area around the wagon was covered with corpses. They ceased being human beings. Thus, did the murders oppress more than they're killing!! There were up to 500 people in each bunker and housed in 8 small bunkers...sodomitic shelters. Hundreds were simply forced to remain outside in the snow and cold. Each bunker had three layers of boards along the side and each person had to find a place. The Jews lived in stifling conditions of filth, hunger and thirst with the fear of death hovering before their eyes. There was unparalleled suffering! The death rate in the Ruzhany bunkers was especially large and there were days that 20 people died per day. The first transport of food – bread and potatoes— was brought only after three days in wagons. The daily ration was ¼ kg of bread and a plate of soup. Not everyone received this meager ration. The issue of heating, necessary for some warmth, and sanitation was very difficult and illness broke out. "Who can describe the agony of the parents when they saw the children dying of hunger before their eyes? Who can imagine the torment of the children upon watching their parents die, leaving them orphaned alone in this dark world? The people of Ruzhany suffered the worst in the bunkers, whose death throes lasted weeks and months with torments every minute, every hour, day-by-day, and night-by-night. The agony of parents was especially great and the atrocities remain etched in the mind of each of us who saw the people of Ruzhany during their last days in the Volkovisk bunkers, more than those that were taken out to be murdered in crowds or groups in other cities."

On November 28, 1942, 4,000 Ruzhany natives were the first to be taken away. They were told they were going to a work camp but actually they went on the extermination freight transport to the oven camp of Treblinka. At night with a freezing temperature below minus 20 and snowstorm in partly barefoot and worn torn clothing they were chased out of the bunkers with murderous blows of rubber batons. "The crying and wailing reached to the heavens. Not one native of Ruzhany remains as an eyewitness to the final torture in the death camp-Treblinka!"

“All generations who issue from us shall recall this forever. That what the German Nazis did to us shall never be forgotten. – Meir Sokolovsky”(1957)²²³

Ruzhany Memorial book lists Sara Rosjanski’s and Aron Zuchowicki’s maternal uncle, Hazkel Orlinsky, and first cousins (six) and second cousins—(see family tree) as martyrs from Rozhinoy.²²⁴ Sara Rosjanski’s and Aron Zuchowicki’s maternal uncle, Shia Orlinski, was married and had seven children (family tree) and also lived in Ruzhany.

213	ORLINSKY	Alter	m	M	Hazkal		Milia	Ruzhany	3
213	ORLINSKY	Avraham	m	U	Alter	Milia		Ruzhany	
213	ORLINSKY	Avraham Yeshiahu	m	M				Ruzhany	1
213	ORLINSKY	Chanoch	m	U	Alter	Milia		Ruzhany	
213	ORLINSKY	Hazkal	m	W				Ruzhany	3
213	ORLINSKY	Milia	f	M			Alter	Ruzhany	3
213	ORLINSKY	Shyndel	f	U	Alter	Milia		Ruzhany	
213	ORLINSKY	unknown	f	M			Avraham Yeshiahu	Ruzhany	1



Figure 163: Ruzhany synagogue from the 1700's, 6/2018

²²³ Rozana, Ruzhany Memorial Book, 1957, Ruzhany translated, Mayer Sokolowsky, p.219-313

²²⁴ Rozana, Ruzhany Memorial Book, 1957, Ruzhany translated, Mayer Sokolowsky, p.351



Figure 164: *Ruzhany synagogue from the 1700's, 6/2018*



Figure 165: *Jewish cemetery in Ruzhany, 6/2018 (David Ross)*

4. Byten (Bitin) – (Zuchowicki family martyrs)

Memorial book of Byten, Pinkas Byten, lists Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski and Aron Zuchowicki paternal uncle, Leyzer Zuchowicki (Zhukhovitski) as well as first and second cousin martyrs.^{225,226}

Byten memorial book with Zuchowicki victims²²⁷—

First slaughter – Shabes <i>Nakhmu</i>¹¹¹	25th of July	1942
Second slaughter – Saturday	29th of August	1942
Third slaughter	19th of September	1943

Zhukhovitski (A)	Leyzer	(the smith from Posterin) — First slaughter	First slaughter
Zhukhovitski	?	his wife — First slaughter	First slaughter
Zhukhovitski	Noske	their son — First slaughter	First slaughter
Zhukhovitski	Tsherne	his wife (Moyshe-Ayzik's daughter) — First slaughter	First slaughter
Zhukhovitski		three of their children — First slaughter	First slaughter
Zhukhovitski (B)	Zelig	(the shoemaker) — Third slaughter	Third slaughter
Zhukhovitski	Simkhe	his son — Third slaughter	Third slaughter
Zhukhovitski (C)	Vikhne	Zelig's wife — September 30, 1942	September 30, 1942
Zhukhovitski	Etl	their daughter — September 30, 1942	September 30, 1942

Leyzer (Schlazer) Zhukovitski (Zuchowicki) was Sara and Aron's paternal uncle. He was a blacksmith (a schmid in yiddish vs the smith) and was from the village of Podstariny (Posterin) near Kossov and Byten.

Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski and Aron Zuchowicki were born in Podstariny (Posterin) and lived in the village up to WWI.

Leyzer's son was Noske and Noske wife, Charna, had 3 children (family tree). Leyzer's daughter, Lieba (Rochel Lieba), was married to a taylor and had 3 children (family tree).

²²⁵ Pinkas Byten – Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich, Berstein, Buenos Aires, 1954, p.570, translation

²²⁶ Records of the Extraordinary State Commission to investigate German-Fascists Crimes, GARF Archives; Byten 1941-42, Zhukhovitzki

²²⁷ Pinkas Byten – Memorial Book of Byten, Abramowich, Berstein, Buenos Aires, 1954

Zelig Zuchowicki (ZHUKHOVITSKI) (his father was deceased) was Sara's and Aron's paternal first cousin. His wife was Vikhna, daughter was Etlya and his son was Simkha (Simcha).

In 1942, Sara Rosjanski and our family lived with Zelig's family in Byten after the Ivatsevichi ghetto expulsion in March 14, 1942. Sara and other family members were able to return to the Ivatsevichi ghetto in the spring of 1942. Sara's and Aron's mother, Razel Zuchowicki, and sister, Lieba Bassar, with her two youngest children, two boys, Isroel Itchie age 8 and brother age 4 remained in Byten with Zelig's family and did not return to Ivatsevichi. They were slaughtered, most likely at the edge of a common trench (grave) on or about July 25, 1942, 11 Tamuz, 5702, with so many other Jews in Byten. Zelig was latter killed near his home, outside of the ghetto, in 1942.

Zeligs Zuchowicki (ZHUKHOVITSKI) wife, Vikhne, and daughter, Etl, escaped from Byten to the Volche Nory forest in the summer of 1942 and were in contact with Sara Rosjanski. They were killed in the forest on or about September 30, 1942.

Zeligs sister, Chana, was married and lived in Byten (family tree). They had many children.

A Letter Written by Zlata Vishnyatsky Before Her Death

(The Small Town of Byten)

I found this letter in the small town of Byten in the Baranovich *oblast*. It was written by Zlata Vishnyatsky and her twelve-year-old daughter Junita to their husband-father. Approximately 1,800 Jews from Byten were killed by the Germans.

Major Vladimir Demidov

July 31, 1942

To Mister Vishner, Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Dear Moshkele and all my dear people,

On July 25 a terrible massacre took place here — as happened in all the other towns. It was a mass murder. Only 350 people are left. 850 died a black death at the hands of the murderers. They were thrown like puppies into latrines. Living children were thrown into pits. I will not write much. I think that someone will survive and that that person will tell of our torments and of our bloody end. We have survived for the time being. . . . But for how long? Every day we wait for death and mourn our near ones. Your family, Moshkele, is already gone. But I envy them. I cannot write any more; it is impossible to tell of our torments. Be healthy — all of you. The only thing that you can do for us is to take revenge on our murderers. We shout to you: Avenge! I kiss you fervently and bid you farewell before we die.

(Added on:)

Dear Father! I say good-bye to you before dying. We very much want to live, but all is lost — they won't let us! I am so afraid of this death, because the small children are thrown alive into the graves. Good-bye forever. I kiss you over and over. A kiss from G.

Your I[ta]

Figure 166: Byten letter, July 31, 1942. *The Black Book* edited by Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, 1980

5. Slonim – (Orlinski family martyrs)

The Memorial Book of Slonim (Pinkas Slonim)²²⁸ lists Sara Rosjanski's and Aron Zuchowicki first cousins, Ester, Sarah, Hillel and Pesch as victims. Their parents were Shimon Aharon Orlinski (Sara Rosjanski called her uncle Shimon-nora and was deceased at the time of the Shoah), and his wife, Mery Orlinski. Mery (Meri) Orlinski attended Sara and Jacobs wedding in 1938. They had 8 children (family tree). Avraham Orlinski survived the Shoah.

Transliterated by Zvi Shefet and Haim Sidor²²⁹

Other information came from the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Page of Testimony, Yad Vashem.

228 Pinkas Slonim, Memorial book of Slonim, 1962 Kalman Lichtenstein

229 Pinkas Slonim, Memorial book of Slonim, 1962 Kalman Lichtenstein

Family Name	First Name	Maiden Name	Gender	Father's Name	Mother's Name	Place of Death	Family Name of Eulogizer	First Name of Eulogizer	Relationship to Eulogizer	Additional Eulogizers
Remen	Esther	Orlinski	F	Shimon Aharon	Mery	Died In Slonim Ghetto	Rizhin	Moshe	Sister	Nachum Alpert
Feigin	Sarah	Orlinski	F	Shimon Aharon	Mery	Died In Slonim Ghetto	Rizhin	Moshe	Brother	Nachum Alpert
Orlinsky	Hillel		M	Shimon Aharon	Mery	Died In Slonim Region	Rizhin	Moshe	Husband	Gita Halperin & Roza Biber (of the Meshel Family)
Orlinsky	Pesach		M	Shimon Aharon	Mery		Dzentzelski		Daughter	Gita Halperin & Roza Biber (of the Meshel Family)



Figure 167: *Slonim Great Synagogue-1642, 6/2018 (oldest Synagogue in Belarus)*



Figure 168: *Slonim Jewish memorials, Czepelova – 30,000 Jews were slaughtered and another memorial for 10,000 that were slaughtered in November 1941, 6/2018.*



Figure 169: *Slonim memorial at Petraleovich Hill- 21,000 Jews were slaughtered on July 15, 1942, 6/2018*



Figure 170: *Slonim Jewish cemetery ruins with a memorial to 35,000 slaughtered Jews and headstones to famous Rabbis, 6/2018*

6. Bialystock – (Spiner (Shpiner, Szpiner)/Orlinski family)

Sara Rosjanski's oldest maternal aunt was Itka Orlinski Spiner. She was married to Wulf Spiner and lived in Bialystock with their six children (family tree) at the time of the shoah. One child was Hillel (Gilel)²³⁰, born in 1902. Itka and Wolf are listed in the Yad Vashem database. We know of no survivors from this family.

In August 1941, the Germans ordered the establishment of a ghetto in Bialystok. About 50,000 Jews from the city and the surrounding region were confined in a small area of Bialystok city. In February 1943, approximately 10,000 Bialystok Jews were deported to the Treblinka killing center. During the deportations, hundreds of Jews, mainly those deemed too weak or sick to travel, were killed. In August 1943, the Germans mounted an operation to destroy the Bialystok ghetto. German forces and local police auxiliaries surrounded the ghetto and began to round up Jews systematically for deportation to the Treblinka killing center. Approximately 7,600 Jews were held in a central transit camp in the city before deportation to Treblinka.²³¹

7. Baranovich – (Zuchowicki Zukhovitzki family)

Yad Vashem database shows many Zuchowicki family members – most likely our family.

B. Einsatzgruppen B (Mobile Killing Units) and Its Subunits

As Operation “Barbarossa” began, the Einsatzgruppen followed the German army Wehrmacht into the Soviet Union. Four units had been established, Einsatzgruppen A, B, C, and D. Each was assigned to liquidate the Jews (Holocaust by bullets) in its region, and each was divided into sub-units called Sonderkommandos or Einsatzkommandos. Einsatzgruppe B, 655 men attached to Army Group Center, worked in Belorussia and the Smolensk district, east of Moscow. The Einsatzgruppen killed their victims—men, women, and children—by gathering them in ravines, mines, quarries, ditches, or pits dug specifically, for this purpose. Jews were forced to hand over their possessions and remove their clothing and were then shot. Their bodies were thrown into the ditches.²³² The Einsatzgruppen murdered between 1.25-2 million Jews and tens of thousands of Soviet citizens and Soviet POWs.²³³



Figure 171: Wikipedia -Web

230 Jewish Record Indexing Poland, 1902 Bialystock birth record for Gilel (Hillel), their son

231 USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia

232 Yah Vashem, Einsatzgruppen

233 The Holocaust: Roots, History, and Aftermath / D.M. Crowe. – Colorado, 2008, p.200

Einsatzgruppen B, mobile killing unit, and specifically its subunit, Sonderkommando 7b (SK 7b) killed Jews (Holocaust by bullets) from Brest-Litovsk to Kobrin to Pruzany to Slonim to Baranovicy. Sonderkommando 7b (SK 7b) most likely killed our family in Ivatsevichi and Byten in 1942. In 1942, Einsatzgruppen B was under the leadership of Erich Naumann. He stood trial in Nuremberg and found guilty of war crimes. He was sentenced to death and was hanged on July 7, 1951. Sonderkommando 7b of Einsatzgruppen B was under the command of Adolf Ott.



Figure 172: Adolf Ott, Wikipedia

Adolf Ott—SS Obersturmbannführer; member of the SD; commanding officer of Sonderkommando 7b of Einsatzgruppe B was tried as part of the Nuremberg

War criminal trials, Military Tribunal II, and sentenced to death by hanging.

His sentence was commuted to lifetime imprisonment then released 9 May 1958!!²³⁴

Einsatzkommando 8 (EK 8) of Einsatzgruppe B (operated from Bialystok to Volkovysk)—most likely killed our family from Ruzhany, Zelva and Volkovysk. Heinz Richter (lawyer) was the commanding officer. He was tried and only sentenced to seven years of imprisonment!!²³⁵



Figure 173: Einsatzgruppen B, web search WWII Gravestone

²³⁴ Web search and Wikipedia

²³⁵ Web search and Wikipedia

C. Family Trees and Documents

My mother's incredible memory provided all of the family tree information for Rosjanski, who came from Zelva; Zuchowicki and Orlinski, who generally came from the Byten, Kossov, Ivatsevichi, Lyubishchitsy, and Podstariny (Pasterine). Family tree notes: b - born, d - died, m - married, o - occupation, * -SHOAH-death, most in August 1942 unless otherwise indicated.

Jean Simons Fredson, my father's first cousin, provided the family tree information for Zlotnicki, Slotnicki, who came from Zelva.

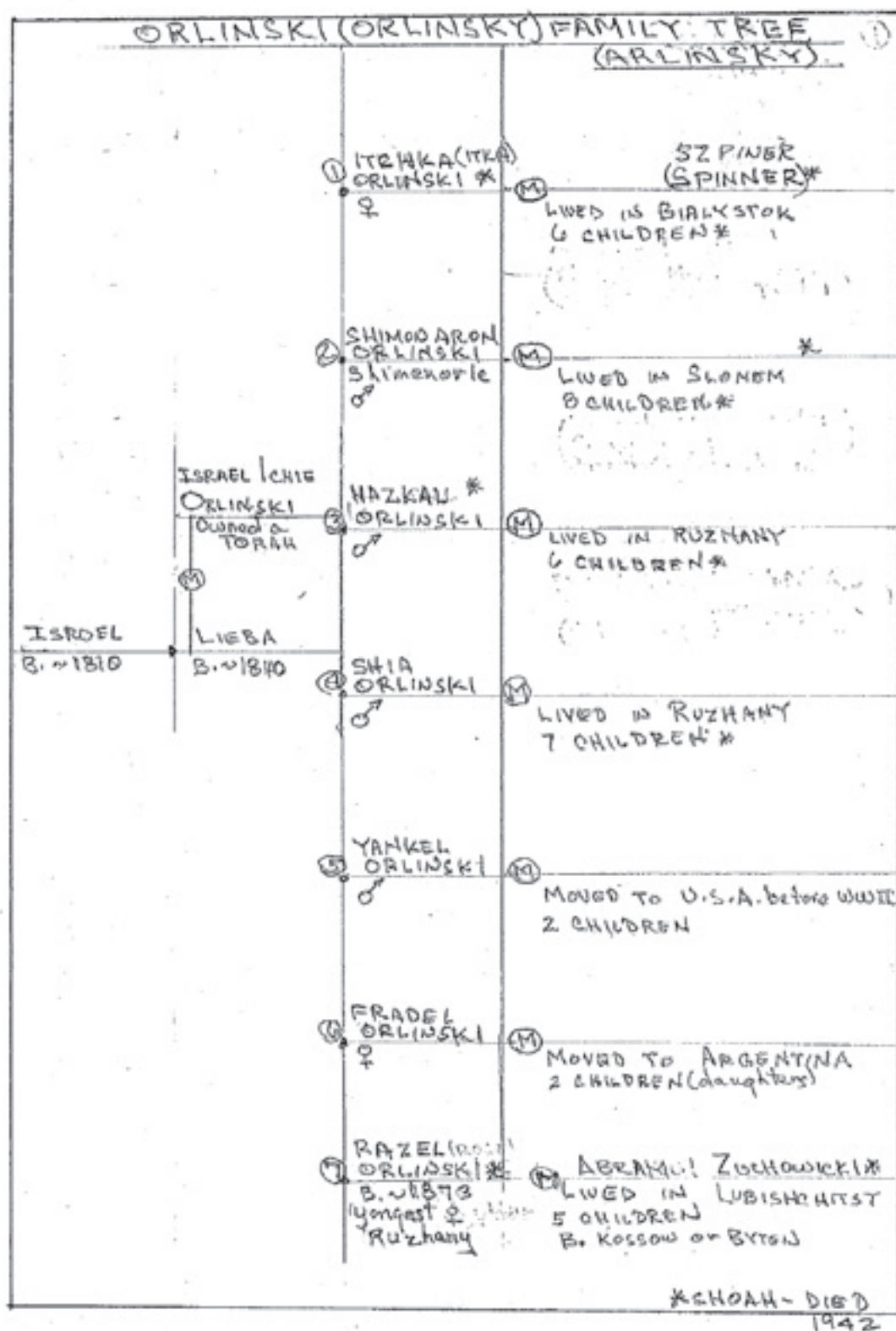
Other information as noted was obtained from Yizkor books, USHMM, Yad Vashem, and web research, although all leads came from my mother's testimony.

1. **Orlinski, Orlinsky – page 1-7²³⁶ (scan p.179)**
2. **Zuchowicki, (Zhukhovitzki) – page 1²³⁷ (scan p.186)**
3. **Zlotnicki, Slotnick, Rosjanski, Ross – page 1-2²³⁸ (scan p.187)**

236 Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski, Ross

237 Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski, Ross

238 Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski, Ross and Jean Simons Fredson



ORLINSKI (2)
ORLINSKY
ARLINSKI
ORLIN

1. ITCHKA ORLINSKI SPINNER (SZPINER)
LIVED IN BIALYSTOK, POLAND; OLDEST SISTER

- ♂ a) MACHE *
 - ♀ b) MINA *
 - ♀ c) SARA *
 - ♀ d) CHENA *
 - ♂ e) HILLEL *
 - ♂ f) BETASCHER *
- 3 SONS AND 3 DAUGHTERS
- ONE SON BECAME A COMMUNIST
IN ~ 1919.

2. SHIMON ARON (SHIMONIE) ORLINSKI

LIVED IN SLOVENIA. 4 SONS AND 4 DAUGHTERS.
FEMALE CLOTHING DESIGNER AND LARGE FARM.

- ♂ a) PASACH *
- ♂ b) MASHA (MOSES) - MOVED TO USA (ABRAHAM & NANCY ROSS - WEDDING)
- ♀ c) ESTHER *
- ♀ d) SARA *
- ♂ e) REVA *
- ♂ f) HILLEL *
- ♀ g) RACHAEL *
- ♂ h) ABRAHAM - Married CZESLOVA - Survived Shoah.
- Moved to USA then ISRAEL after WWII.
- He was an engineer, Cheshlava was a Rehatnik.

3. HAZKAL ORLINSKI *

- ♂ a) MENDAL
- ♀ b) MALKA.
- ♂ c) MASCHU
- ♂ d) YAEV
- ♂ e) SCHMUEL - had two children:
- ♀ f) SARA

* SHOAH - DIED 1942

- a) Chana b. 1925
remained in Russia
after WWII
- b) Chaim, Founa
b. 1927 -
moved to Israel from
Russia in 1979
(Abraham Ross met in
1981 in Israel)

4. SHIA ORLINSKI

LIVED IN RUZHANY

- a) daughter *
- b) daughter *
- c) son ? MOVED TO ARGENTINA
- d) CHANA ? MOVED TO ARGENTINA
- e) REIVA - MOVED TO U.S.A.
- f) SARA *
- g) daughter *

5. YANKEL ORLINSKI

MOVED TO U.S.A. before WWII

- a) DAVID (at ABRAHAM AND NANCY WEDDING)
- b) ? daughter

6. FRADL - married

MOVED TO ARGENTINA ? before WWII
LARGE CATTLE RANCH

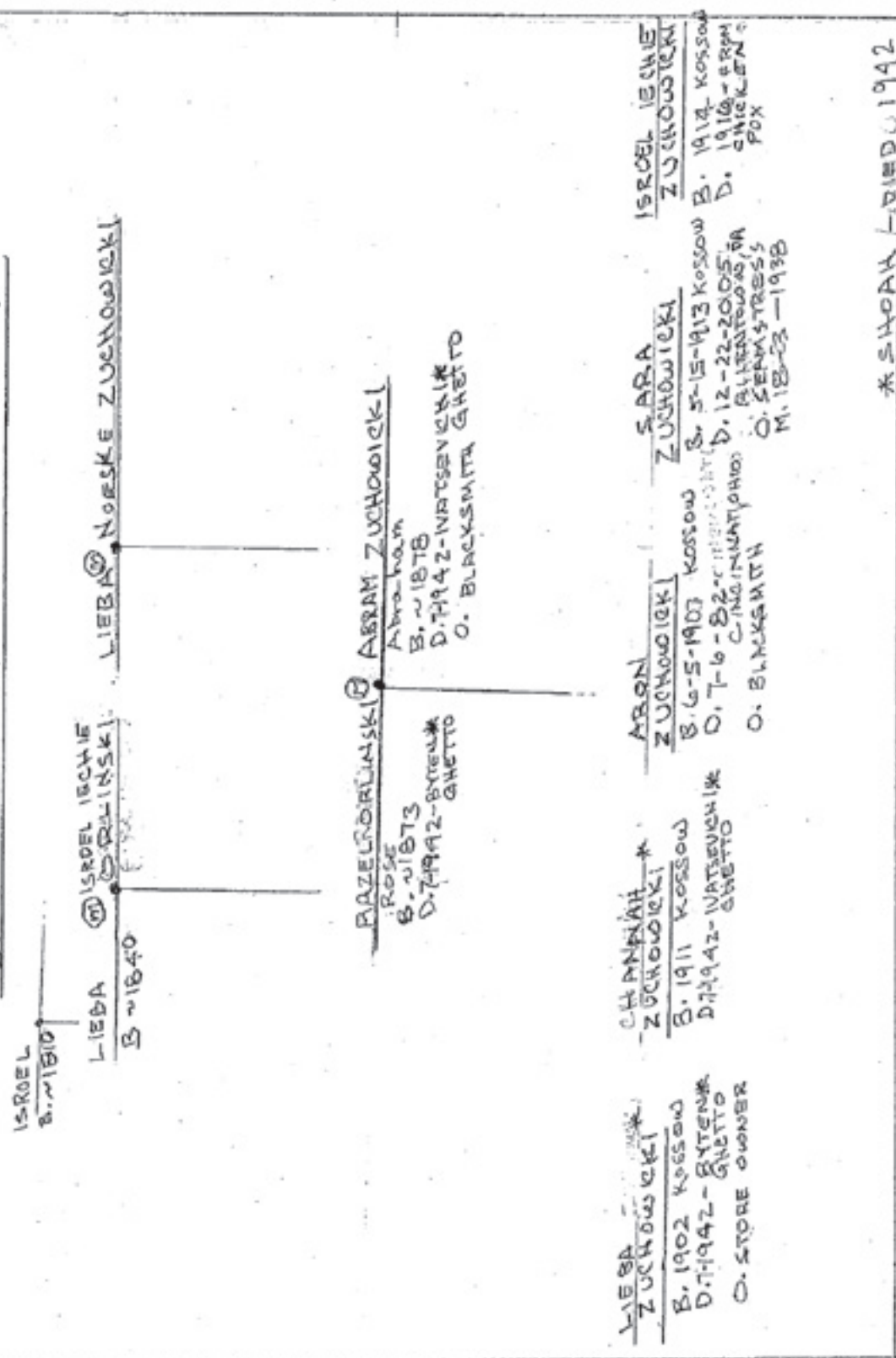
- a) daughter
- b) daughter

7. RAZEL ORLINSKI * married ABRAM ZUCHOWICK (*
LIVED near KOSOW (up to WWII) then LUBISHCHITSY
Youngest child.

- ♀ a) LIEBA *
- ♀ b) HANNAH *
- ♂ c) ARON
- ♂ d) ISROEL - ICHIE - Died 1916, age 2, from MEASLES as child
- ♀ e) SARA

*SHOAH-DIED
1942

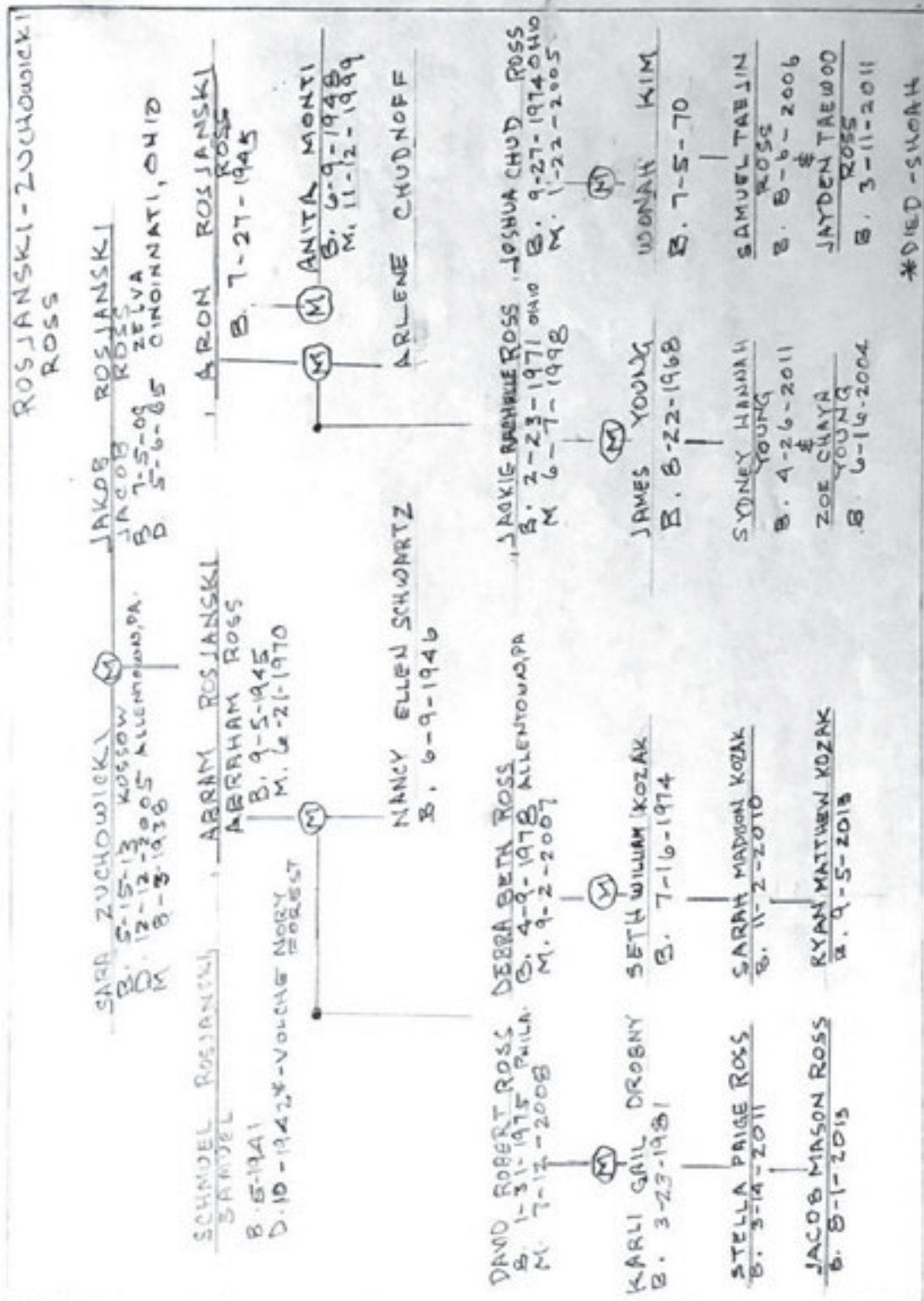
ZUCHOWICKI - ORLINSKI FAMILY TREE



ISRAEL ZUCHOWICKI
B. ~1810
D. 1942

ZUCHOWICKI - ROSJANSKI - ROSS

<p><u>LIEBA ZUCHOWICKI</u> <u>BASER</u> B. 1902 KOSSOW, N. D. 7-1942 BYTEN * O. STORE OWNER <u>BERYL BASER</u> B. 1902 D. 6-1944 VOLCHE MORY FOREST * O. STORE OWNER</p>	<p><u>BAGLE BASER</u> B. 1930 LUBISHCHITSY, POLAND D. 7-1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO</p> <p><u>ISROEL IECHIE BASER</u> B. 1934 LUBISHCHITSY, POLAND D. 1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO</p> <p><u>MALE</u> B. 1938 LUBISHCHITSY, POLAND D. 1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO</p>
<p><u>CHANNA ZUCHOWICKI</u> <u>UTSCHTEIN</u> B. 1911 KOSSOW D. 7-1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO * <u>CHAIM UTSCHTEIN</u> B. 1913 D. 7-1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO * O. BLACKSMITH</p>	<p><u>NOESKE UTSCHTEIN</u> (NOSEN) B. 1936 IVATSEVICH, POLAND D. 7-1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO</p> <p><u>YOSIE UTSCHTEIN</u> (JOSEPH) B. 1939 - IVATSEVICH, POLAND D. 7-1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO *</p> <p><u>NEWBORN GIRL</u> B. 1942 D. 1942 at BIRTH IVATSEVICH * GHETTO</p>
<p><u>ARON ZUCHOWICKI</u> B. 6-5-1910 KOSSOW D. 7-6-1982 CINCINNATI, OHIO O. BLACKSMITH</p> <p><u>ETHEL ZUCHOWICKI</u> B. 1919 D. 7-1942 IVATSEVICH * GHETTO *</p>	<p><u>LIEBA ZUCHOWICKI</u> B. 1941 LUBY D. 7-1942 (New mo) IVATSEVICH * GHETTO</p> <p><u>INFANT GIRL</u> B. 1942 LUBY D. 7-1942 (New mo) IVATSEVICH * GHETTO</p> <p><u>ARON ZUCHOWICKI</u> PHYLLIS ZUCHOWICKI B. 5-6-1941 LINZ, AUSTRIA M. 11-15-70</p> <p><u>SARA POLONSKI</u> <u>ZUCHOWICKI</u> B. 4-3-1920 KOSSOW D. 6-28-2005 DENVER COLORADO O. ADMINISTRATOR</p>
<p><u>SARA ZUCHOWICKI</u> <u>ROSJANSKI</u> <u>ROSS</u> B. 5-15-1913 KOSSOW D. 12-22-2005 ALLENSTOWN, PA O. SEWNITRESS M. 8-2-1938</p> <p><u>JACOB ROSJANSKI</u> <u>YANKEL JAKOB</u> <u>ROSS</u> B. 7-5-1909 ZEWAR D. 5-6-1969 O. HAT MAKER</p>	<p><u>SAMUEL ROSJANSKI</u> (SAMUEL) B. 4-1941 LUBISHCHITSY, POLAND D. 10-1942 VOLCHE MORY FOREST *</p> <p><u>ABRAM ROSJANSKI</u> <u>ABRAHAM</u> (ROSS) B. 4-5-1945 LUBISHCHITSY POLAND/ BELARUS</p> <p><u>O. PHYSICIAN</u> <u>ARON ROSJANSKI</u> <u>ROSS</u> B. 7-27-1948 LINZ, AUSTRIA O. EDUCATOR / ADMINISTRATOR</p> <p>DIED * 5 HORR - 1942</p>



ZUCHOWICKI-BABICH

ARON ZUCHOWICKI

B. 6-3-10
D. 7-6-82

(M)

SARA POLONSKI

B. 4-3-20
D. 6-28-2005

PHYLLIS ZUCHOWICKI

B. 3-6-49 LINZ, AUSTRIA
M. 11-15-70

(M)

MICHAEL BABICH

B. 9-12-1948

MELISSA BABICH

B. 3-28-1975 CLEVELAND, OHIO

ARON BABICH

B. 7-26-1982 DENVER
M. 10-14-2012

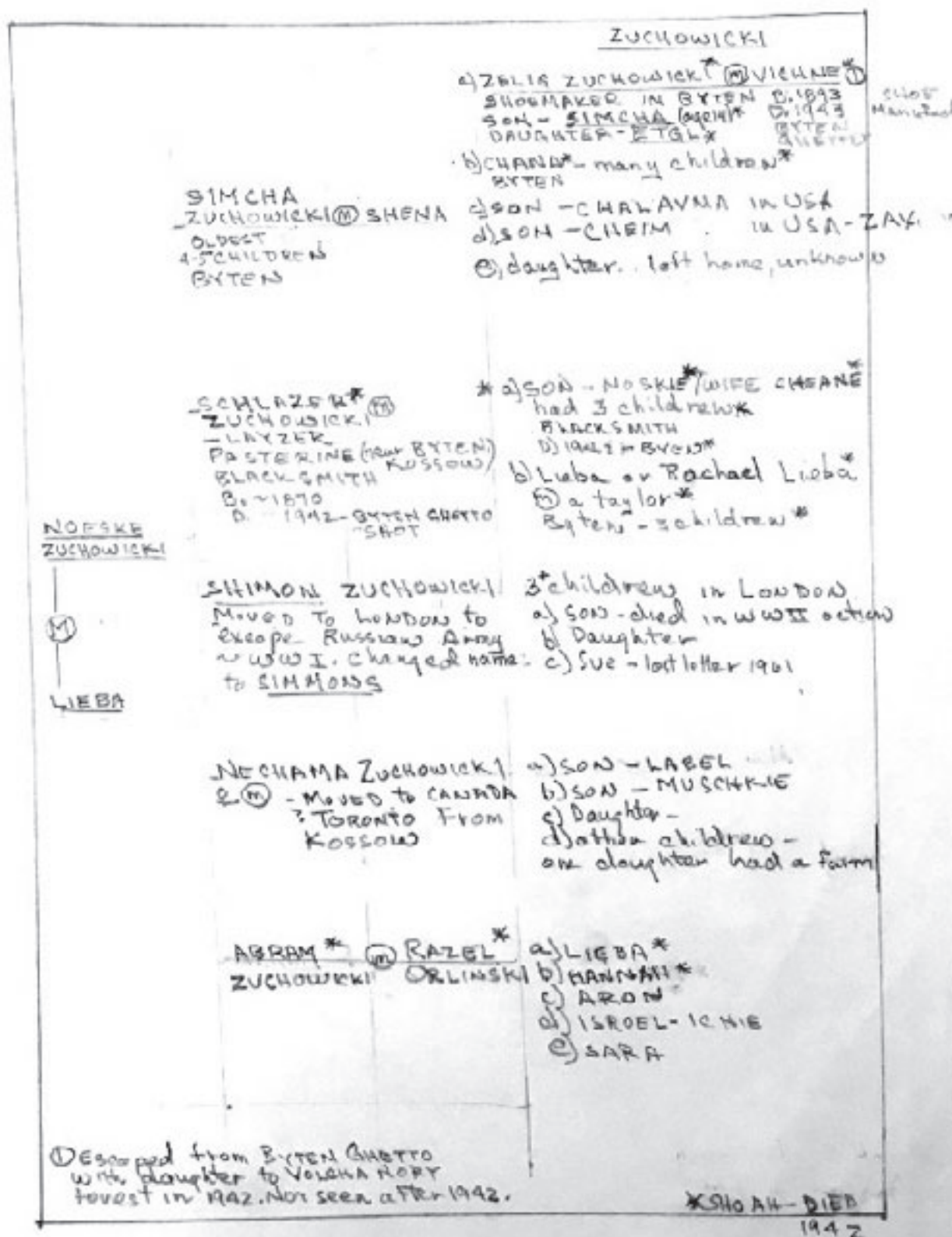
(M)

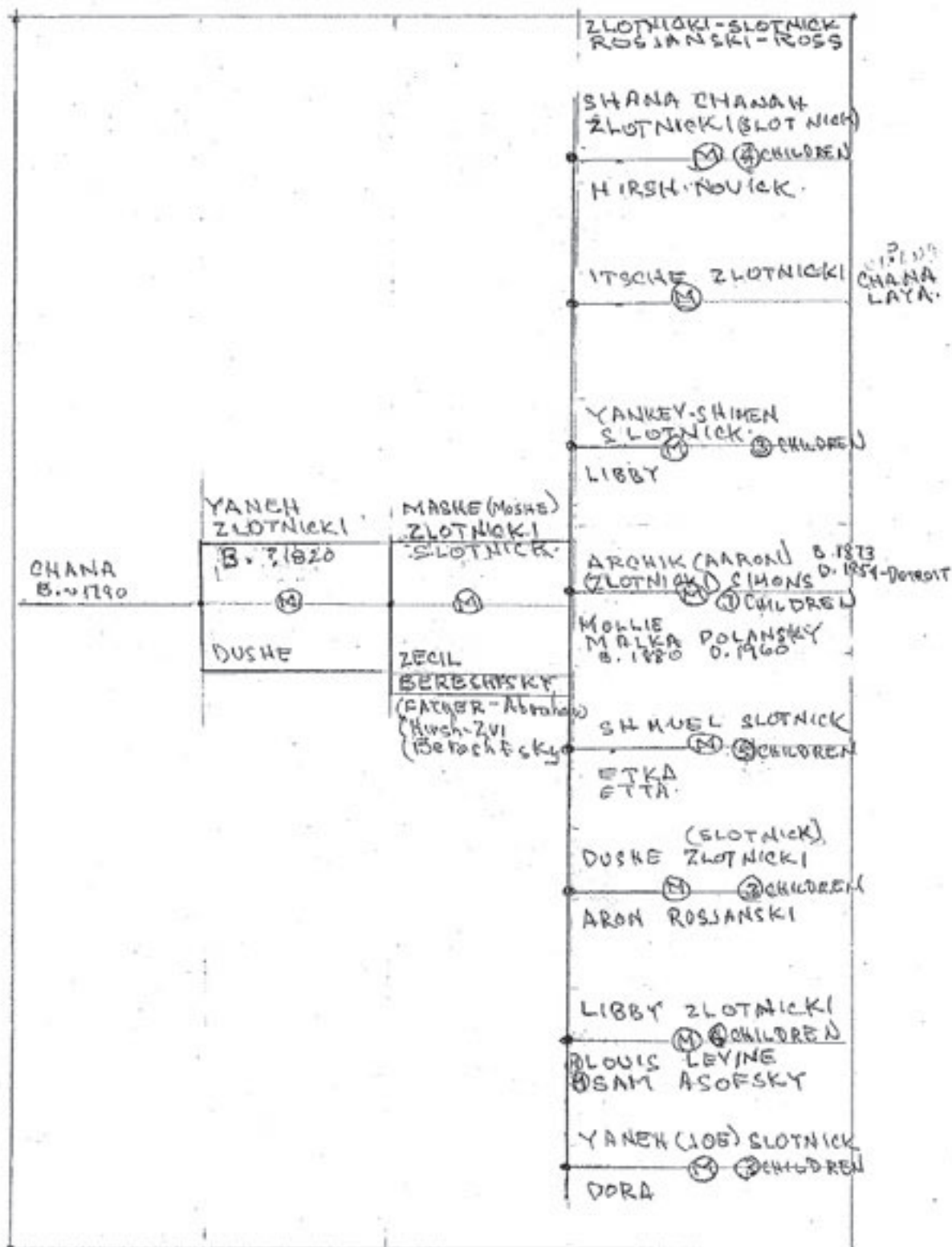
JAMIE GOODMAN

B. 10-24-1983


ZANDER BABICH

B. 2-28-2015





4. Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List ²³⁹ – Shimen Orlinski, father-Srol, from Slonim, - uncle of Sara Rosjanski Zuchowicki and Aron Zuchowicki.



Introducing the world's largest online collection of Jewish family history records.

ancestry.com
Discover >

Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List

Searching for Surname ORLINSKI

(D-M code 098445)

Number of hits: 20

Run on Tuesday 29 May 2012 at 13:17:35

Surname	Voter	Father	Residence	District	ID #
ORLINSKI	Shimen	Srol		Slonim	SL0a0569
ORLINSKI	Khatskel	Mendel		Slonim	SL0a0571
ORLINSKI	Bentsyon	Yosel		Bialystok	BLAa3728
ORLINSKI	Italo Meir	Mendel		Bialystok	BLAa3729
ORLINSKI	Yankel	Bentsyon		Bialystok	BLAa3730
ORLYANSKI	Elye		Pruchany	Pruchany	PRU10654
ORLYANSKI	Abram Shlomo	Leizer		Bialystok	BLAa3731
ORLYANSKI	David	Mordko		Bialystok	BLAa3732
ORLYANSKI	Mordko Shmuel			Bialystok	BLAa3734
ORLYANSKI	Chaim Shlomo	Shlomo Shlomo		Bialystok	BLAa3735


²³⁹ Grodno Gubernia 1912 Voters List, JewishGen web site

5. The Nowogrodek Province 1929 Polish Business Directory²⁴⁰

- A. Zuchowicki, cobbler/shoe repair, from Byten (? Zelig's father, paternal cousin Zelig was a cobbler)
- H. Zuchowicki, blacksmith, from Byten (paternal uncle was a blacksmith)

The Nowogrodek Province 1929 Polish Business Directory

Sign up now for the JGFFAlert and other Value-Added services!



Value-Added Services
 Sign Up NOW
 and
 Help JewishGen Help You!


Searching for Surname ZUCHOWICKI					
Number of hits: 25					
Run on Saturday 25 March 2006 at 15:53:19					
Town (coords)	District	Name / Company (registered)	Street	Occupation	Note
Byten	Slonim	ZUCHOWICKI, A		cobbler/shoe repair	
Derewna	Wolozyn	ZUCHOWICKI, A		fabric	
Kozłowszczyzna	Slonim	ZUCHOWICKI, A		painter	
Horodziej	Nieswicz	ZUCHOWICKI, Ch		grocer of staple items excluding bakery and dairy	
Baranowicze	Baranowicze	ZUCHOWICKI, G	Szosnowa	tailor	
Zdzieciol	Nowogrodek	ZUCHOWICKI, G		fabric	
Byten	Slonim	ZUCHOWICKI, H		blacksmith	
Horodziej	Nieswicz	ZUCHOWICKI, I		fabric	
Horodziej	Nieswicz	ZUCHOWICKI, I (x)		horse trader	
Horodziej	Nieswicz	ZUCHOWICKI, L		seltzer	
Horodziej	Nieswicz	ZUCHOWICKI, L		seed/grain	
Baranowicze	Baranowicze	ZUCHOWICKI, M	Swiecilowska	locksmith	

²⁴⁰ The Nowogrodek Province, 1929, Polish Business Directory, JewishGen website

6. **Aron Rosjanski (Jacob Rosjanski's father) sailed to USA in 1921 from Poland.**

Aaron had relatives in America and was going to send for this family when he was financially stable which did not occur, so he returned to Poland. He arrived on April 12, 1921, age 33, via ship – Susquehanna, from Danzig, Germany to Boston, Massachusetts²⁴¹.

Boston Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820-1943	
Name:	Aron Rosjanski
Arrival Date:	12 Apr 1921
Age:	33
Estimated birth year:	abt 1888
Gender:	Male
Ethnic Background:	Hebrew
Port of Departure:	Danzig, Germany
Ship Name:	Susquehanna
Port of Arrival:	Boston, Massachusetts
Friend's Name:	Charles Lovovitch
Last Residence:	Poland
Birthplace:	Ross, Poland




 [View original image](#)

Figure 174: *Aron Rosjanski*

²⁴¹ Susquehanna Passenger List, ancestry.com, The National Archives

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE

Passengers sailing from SAN FRANCISCO MARCH 18

No.	NAME	Age	Sex	Color	Religion	Profession	Country	City or town	Remarks
1	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
2	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
3	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
4	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
5	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
6	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
7	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
8	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
9	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
10	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
11	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
12	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
13	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
14	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
15	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
16	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
17	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
18	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
19	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
20	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
21	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
22	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
23	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
24	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
25	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
26	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
27	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
28	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
29	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
30	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
31	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
32	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
33	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
34	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
35	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
36	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
37	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
38	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
39	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
40	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
41	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
42	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
43	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
44	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
45	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
46	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
47	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
48	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
49	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
50	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
51	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
52	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
53	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
54	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
55	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
56	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
57	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
58	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
59	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
60	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
61	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
62	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
63	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
64	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
65	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
66	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
67	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
68	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
69	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
70	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
71	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
72	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
73	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
74	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
75	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
76	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
77	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
78	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
79	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
80	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
81	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
82	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
83	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
84	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
85	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
86	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
87	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
88	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
89	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
90	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
91	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
92	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
93	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
94	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
95	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
96	ADAM, ARON	45	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA
97	CHARLA	18	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
98	TOMA	2	F	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
99	DARIE	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	UNCLE
100	SURA	18	M	White	Russian	Polish	Poland	Warsaw	ACQUAINTANCE: ARON ROSEN, POLAND- WITKA, SLOVA

Figure 175: *Susquehanna* passenger list, *Aron Rosjanski*-line 18

7. Byten Revision Lists for 1806, 1850 and 1858 listing Zukhovitsky (Zuchowicki), could be relatives 242

242 Byten 1806, 1850 and 1858 Revision List, JewishGen web site (The Ревизские сказки Reviska Skazka (“Revision Lists”) were conducted in territories ruled by the Russian Czar in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Revision Lists enumerated only those individuals subject to taxation. The data was also utilized for identifying men to draft into the army. There were ten major Reviska Skazka taken, beginning in 1719 and ending in 1858.

DANZIG		DANZIG	
20/28	Rabinowicz, Isaac	1/1	Ryba Slepian
20/29	" Leja	1/16	Schar & Bein, Ekla
20/30	" Mojżesz	1/17	Szczepaniak, Maria
21/25	Rubin, Ryfka	1/17	Szwarcbard, Rezia
21/26	" Chaak	2/20	Szwinder, Szyfra
21/27	" Chaja, bre	3/8	Solowiejczyk, Szymon
21/28	" Zygza, Cyła	1/16	Szajn, Jas
21/29	" Szyfra	1/18	Slagowski, Boris
27/13	Rachlis, Felida	1/32	Silbstein, Jasek
29/9	Rejc, Abram	1/35	Smolary, Jeko
29/10	Rudkowski, Mordeche	1/2	Szulek, Leiba
30/2	Rabinowicz, Abram	1/3	" Israel
30/7	Rogowski, Reisach	1/4	Szprinc, Szul
30/18	Rabinstein, Maksim	1/13	Solowiejczyk, Lejser
30/22	Radzicki, Michal Aron	1/20	Sluckin, Benjamin
31/5	Rataneka, Genofela	1/1	Szwarymann, Rata
31/6	" Alexander	1/2	" Usser
34/4	Rosenberg, Mordko	1/3	" Ruchla
34/19	Rubinstein, Chawa	1/4	" Hersz
36/18	Rozjanski, Aron	1/5	" Jankiel
38/1	Rzondzinska, Ester	1/6	" Brana
38/2	" Lura	1/10	Szulak, Szalama
38/3	" Leib	1/1	" Ruchel
38/4	" Chana	1/2	" Myszka
38/5	" Chaim	1/3	" Schlomo
41/21	Ryza, Genofela	1/8	Steinkrug, Rida
42/7	Reisnman, Malka	1/2	Szaplo, Ruzia
43/17	Rucker, Eleanor	1/3	" Gitla
43/25	Rogowska, Maria	1/4	" Abram
45/13	Rabinowicz, Szyfra	1/10	Szilmann, Jozef
45/14	" Szyfra, Szyfra	1/11	" Sza
45/15	" Lejser	1/11	Szram, Matla
45/16	" Leiba		

Figure 176: Aron Rosjanski, line 36.

8. Itka Orlinski (Orlinska) was Sara Zuchowicki Rosjanski oldest maternal aunt who lived in Bialystok, Poland. Itka married (Wulf) Szpiner and had 6 children.

JRI Poland

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland, Inc. is an independent non-profit tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible in the U.S.A.

JRI Poland is hosted by JewishGen.

ORDERING RECORDS FROM THE POLISH STATE ARCHIVES

The JRI-Poland online order processing system has been terminated by the Polish State Archives. For more information, please [click here](#).

To order records not microfilmed by the LDS Church from index entries in this database ("PSA" will appear in the heading of each search results table), please contact the Archive or Branch of the Polish State Archives that hold those records (identified in the heading of the search results table). For [JRI-Poland's suggested procedure](#) to order directly from the Archives, click [here](#).

For further information about ordering, consult the [Order FAQ](#).

OBTAINING RECORDS INDEXED FROM LDS (MORMON) MICROFILMS

Click [here](#) for more information about acquiring copies.

RECORDS INDEXED FROM OTHER SOURCES

Scroll down to the bottom of this search results page to find contact information or links to further information.

Please direct all comments and queries to: info@jri-poland.org.

Run on Tuesday 29 May 2012 at 19:59:21

Searching for Surname SZPNER
(D-M code 476900)
in Grodno Gubernia
in ALL data

Bialystok PSA Births 1888-1905 Marriages 1887-1905 Deaths 1888-90,92-94,97-1900,02,05 Grodno Gubernia / Bialystok Province (records in Fond 264 in Bialystok Archive) Located at 53°08' 23"00" Last updated May 2007									
Surname	Givenname	Year	Type	Akt	Father	Mother	Mothername	Remarks	Surname2
SZPNER	Szol Dawidowicz	1888	D	123					
SZPNER	Cadel	1900	B	147M	Wulf Mowszowicz	Itka Girszowna			
SZPNER	Chana-Rywka Mowszowna	1900	D	273F					
ZOLTNER	Dawid Abramowicz	1900	M	266					
SZPNER	Majla / Majka Jedydyjowna	1900	M	266					
ZOLTNER / ZOLYNER	Szloma	1901	B	511M	Dawid Abramowicz	Majla Jedydyjowna	SZPNER		
SZPNER	Gidel (Tullil, Lila)	1902	B	74M	Wulf Mowszowicz	Itka Itka Ikwowna	ORLINSKA		
ZOLTNER	Liliza	1903	B	211F	Dawid Abramowicz	Majla Jedydyjowna	SZPNER		

<http://data.jewishgen.org/wconnect/wc.d875g-jgsys-jripilat2> Page 1

9. Immigration records.

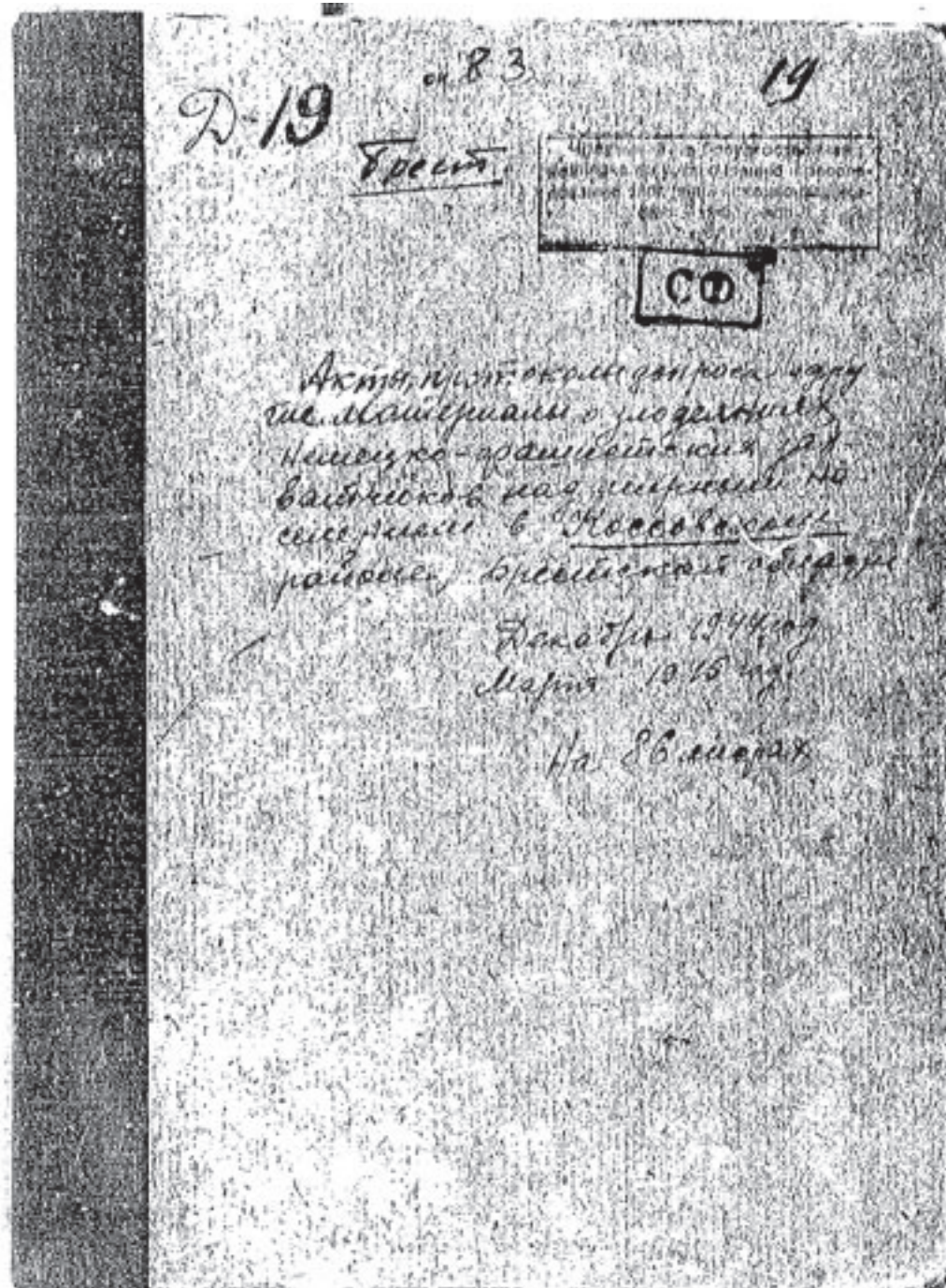
Ellis Island records for Rosjanski from Zelwa (Zelva); Zuchowicki from Byten 1907; Zlotnicka from Zelva 1922; Orlinski. Could be relatives.²⁴³

Ancestry.com records for Rosjanski from Ross (Ros) and Zelva; Zuchowicki from Biten (Byten), ship passage in 1913, Hamburg to England. Could be relatives. We had many relatives that immigrated to USA.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Ellis Island passenger records

²⁴⁴ Ancestry.com

D. Russian and Translated Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory from the USSR, State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF) — Reel 16-Belarus-Brest Oblast — Ivatsevichi 1944/1945²⁴⁵



245 Russian document and translation, USHMM

...вспоминать
...обнаруж
...на перу
...-своими
...грудь, а
...трени
...растения
...ничего не
...в замесам

ново

Шко

Вспоминать ... - ... по ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...

... - ...
... ...
... ...

... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...

... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...

... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...

... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...
... ...

Протокол
допроса свидетеля

 W_0

1945 г. январь 18 дня. Нар. инспектор
прокуратуры Косовского р. на с/р. в
допроса 6 человек свидетелей с обвинением
по ст. 136 УК

2) Давидович Николита Филипповна
с 1924 г. поведет, уродиска и противно-
укай в пос. Иваневичи. Ю. Освои поведет и с
Колосового р. ма. Юресскойовой, Белорусская,
и Юресской, уродиска, Ю. Юресской,
с Юресской: Юресской

По делу показана: до браня немецкой
покупателю пос. Ивашевича я была в этом
поселке. Немецки фамилии из домов Голыши-
нско населяют поселка в в дома посели-
лись сами. Все имущество ограбили у
населения. На окраине поселка устроили
шпионку и повесили у Цаха, Митурка,
Клюдо за связь с партизанами. Повесили
на улице населяют поселка и бросили в
Кировку. Заключенные купаты не давали,
на допросах избивали и убивали. Иногда
заключенные когда их таска с допросов в
Кировку умирали на улице от измученности.
Так немцы захватили пр. Боготареву,
Богородного Виктора. Многие заключенные
умирали от удара и кончили жизнь
самоубийством - резали сами себя степями
и ножами. Так погнали Цинер Иван и
Колупин Иван, которые зарезались ножом в
Кировской уездовой. Немцы приказали
после 5 часов вечера никому из жителей
населения не выходить на улицу. Одну из
пр. Митурка Екатерина в 6 часов вечера ушла
визита на улицу и пошла к соседке. Часовой
немцы расстреляли путь их же в 10 м. от ее
дома. Через несколько дней в 5 ч. вечера про-
шли около немецкой конспирации Шморзе,
Францисса которого не помню. Многие расстреля-
ли его, стреляли в грудь, а плечу крови
распустили песком. Я видела как крестьянин
Францисса которого не помню, был по улице
поселка двора на лоджии и сверху в сторо-
ну при входе с немецкой автомашиной

Neubrecht, Jr.

из автомашинных выехови мениз и
из них крестьянства резни бой пайкой до
потери сознания. Я видела, как мениз
русских военнопленных вмени на расстрел
в поле. При этом мениз вали боеприпасы
в окоп, а военнопленных заставляли
бегать впереди и ударить резни
вмени пайками. Вени за военноплен-
ными мениз вали с собой попой,
средины они вали вени с собой попой,
чтобы поже расстреля зарыть прыт
военнопленных. Однажды я видела, как
мениз расстрелил на откосе группу
русских военнопленных за то, что они
пошли в поже за водой. Один красноармеец
раненый от выстрела проши поже в поже
мени до то мениз и издевался над ним,
от поже до то ударом в голову прикладом
биловок. Летом в 1942 года мениз
устроили еврейский погром. Еврейскую группу
мени вали на расстрел и возили на
автомашинах. При этом мениз все
еврейские были еврейскими пайками
и вали мени на руках детей. Кню
такая мени вали, того мени вали на
дороге расстреливали. Ток мениз убил
Завраженца Дотору и др. Я слышала крики
и поже еврейского на расстреливали,
мощная выстрелы. Мениз расстреливали
вместе с еврейскими поже родствеников. Бени
рыков мениз вали вали и в 5 детей. и
сильно поже. Мениз вали вали.
Мениз в поже вали несколько мени, поже
возили немедленно прыт мениз по
убийствам. Мениз на улице хватили
человека и мени он мени до то мени
мни. Его мени вали. Все мени
по поже мениз убил и замирили поже
350 человек. Кроме того, мениз вали
убили. Мениз поже вали в мениз поже
равство и убили поже 100 человек.
Особенно жестоко поже отмирили
мнизны отмирили - Кетревицкий поже
поже, Егоров, Мунда Мале, Бинерерте
которые. Мнизны поже на расстрел
поже до то мениз мени не поже, поже
в поже поже вали. Вени

Нар. мниз вали - Серова

1945. Я
прокурор
допроси
предуп.
пр. 150/12
с 19061.
Колова
Брест о
грамоте
По де
призно
в этом
маг. м
в поже
на у
поже м
поже о
улице
мни
и по
мни
в мени
пр. Кю
в поже
мни
мни
и поже
в мени
еврей
мни
в мени
завра
разд
завра
еврей
собо
и при
поже

...меморанду
на, как, как
ам на рас
...востро
...заставили
...принимать
...востановлен
...с поселка.
...собрать
...архивные
...и видела, как
...много групп
...о, что они
...и красноарм
...чтобы сегод
...амая мад на
...олоду прик
...ога, немцы
...и. Евреи групп
...возникли на
...лизи все
...всем танка
...детей. Кто
...путь они ма
...немцы убива
...лица кр
...спиритизм
...пасторальн
...твельников-Б
...с 5 детей. и
...6 человек.
...мого был, куда
...матерей по
...схватили
...року, что то
...аны. После на
...ушли. Гол
...из 4 мам
...2 в мамин
...100 человек
...матерей
...стали по
...е, Гимлер
...на, расстр
...ую, провоз
...на еврей

Протокол
допроса свидетеля
1945 г. Январь 18 дня. Наг. Подполковник
противопавший Коловенто р. ма. Серова
допросима в качестве свидетеля с
предупреждением по ст. 136 УК
р. Борзиского Ивана Ивановича
с 1906 г. рождения, уроженец д. Рутана
Коловенто р. ма, противопавший в. Колов
Брестской обл., Белорусия, из крестьян,
грамотный, б/п, неженат, с 1919 г. по 1945 г.
По делу показав. Во время немецко-
фашистской оккупации поселка Исаевы я был
в этом поселке. Немцы постоянно издевались
над нашим поселком. Они построили
в поселке две тюрьмы. Хватали население
на улице и вносили при себе доклады
об их состоянии. Много убивали людей.
Тогда они схватили гр. Колоско, взяли ее по
улице, забили из ружья несколько
раз, убивали малюток, вывозили из город
и расстреливали. Тогда же убили семью
Шиманских. 5 человек, семью Шиманских
6 человек. Немцы повесили на вышке
гр. Колоско и гр. Весе. Матерей поселка
взимали много раз по какому-то делу, а кто не
давал ответа, того били разговаривали
малюток. Всех евреев немцы огради
ли и вогнали вместе на окраину
поселка. Зимой немцы всех евреев
выгнали из поселка в лес, где много
евреев заморзли. Летом в 1942 году
немцы устроили еврейский погром.
Весь еврейский народ в поле за поселком,
представили перед войсками немцев, заставили
раздеться и расстреляли. Трупы
закинули в лес. Остатки с убитых
евреев немцы разгребли между
собою. Кто из евреев (не хотел и тот)
прятаться и убежал при погроме,
того немцы убивали по запискам -
Борзиского И. И.

[illegible]

Список
Советских граждан убитых, навлеченных,
заключенных, пыток, расстрелянных, захваченных
по Ивачевскому повстанству Ковынского р-на Иркут. обл.

[illegible]

Protocols, eyewitness reports, and other documents of the atrocities committed by Nazi occupiers against civilians in the Kossovo Region, Brest Oblast.

December 1944

March 1945

On 86 pages

Protocol #3

On the 20th day of 1945, we, members of the Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Atrocities in the Ivatsevichi Village Council, Kossovo Region, Brest Oblast, compiled this official report. Presided: Village Council Chair, Uskesh?? Polina Mikhailovna, Village Council Secretary, Butsko, Lyubov Filipovna, and an Ivatsevichi resident, Bogutsky, Ivan Ivanovich.

The following facts were established wherein:

During their occupation of the Ivatsevichi Village Council, Kossovo Region, Nazi occupiers committed atrocities against the population of the village of Ivatsevichi.

Germans robbed the village population, conducted illegal searches of people's homes, confiscated cattle, bread, clothing, and other valuable possessions. They evicted most home owners from their homes into the streets, and moved in themselves. The entire village population was stripped of their rights. In the village, the Germans built two jails and a gallows. There was a German Commanders Office and German Police Quarters in the village. Every day the Germans murdered, hanged, and tortured Belarusians, Poles, Jews, and Russians.

German Commanders issued an order forbidding the villagers to be outside after 5 PM. Citizen Titko, Yekaterina left her house at 5 PM in the winter of 1942 and was shot by a German sentry 10 min. away from her house.

Germans seized people on the streets and checked their papers. Those who didn't have valid ID's were declared partisans and either killed on the spot or imprisoned. In this very manner Yekaterina Volochko was apprehended by a German, who gagged her with rags and marched her down the street while beating her with a baton. At the end of the street, outside of the village, he shot and killed her. Six members of the Ivatsevichevsky family and 6 members of the Moltan family were killed in the same manner. Often, German sentries shot passer-bys in the night, then hid the bodies, and put sand on top of the puddles of blood on the ground to cover them up.. In the jails, the Germans tortured prisoners in the cruelest way. People were denied food, caned till they fainted, or killed outright. The jails were packed to the rim with prisoners and they were dying of starvation, suffocation, or beatings; some committed suicide. Comrades Bogudsky and Bogatyrova died this way. Comrade Ivan Goschik (??) was murdered during an interrogation.

In 1943, Germans executed by hanging comrades Tsack, Minchuk, Khlyudko, and others, for their ties to partisans. All the villagers were ordered to come and watch the execution. Those who refused to go were beaten.

All the village Jews were kicked out to the outskirts of the village where they were surrounded by barbed wire. Every day the Jews were forced to do the most difficult work. At work, Jews were beaten with rubber batons with no reason whatsoever. The only food the Jews were given was 200 g of bread a day. The Jews had to wear yellow circles on their clothes. Those who didn't, were beaten. In the winter of 1942, the Germans marched half-dressed Jews into the woods. Many of the Jews died in the forest because of extreme temperatures. When the Jews went back to the village, the Germans gathered them together again. In the summer of 1942, Germans started a Jewish pogrom. All the Jews were rounded up and marched to a field behind the village. They were ordered to dig a trench, 10 m x 5 m in size. The Germans pulled gold teeth out of some of the Jews. Then the Jews were ordered to take off their clothes and line up at the edge of the trench. Then they were shot and their bodies were buried in the trench. All in all, Germans buried more than 290 Jews in that trench and they took the dead Jews' clothes for themselves.

After the Jewish pogrom, Germans started killing Russians, Poles, and Belarusians and their bodies were then buried in a trench, in a field near the village.

The cruelest Germans were officers Shulka, Max, and Bliffert.

During the occupation of the village, Germans murdered and tortured to death more than 350 villagers: Russians, Belarusians, Jews, and Poles.

When Germans were retreating in the summer of 1944, forced out by the Red Army, they burned most of the houses in the village of Ivatsevichi and forcibly took with them over 100 villagers.

Secretary: Butsko, (another name) round seal (certified by the regional secretary)

Eyewitness Testimony Transcript

January 18, 1945. Kossovo DA investigator, Serova, questioned a witness, citizen Lavrenchuk, Antonina Filipovna, according to article 136 of the Penal Code. Citizen Lavrenchuk, born in 1924 in the village of Ivatsevichi and presently residing at 1, Osvobozhdenia (Liberation) Street, Ivatsevichi, Kossovo Region, Brest Oblast, Belarusian, peasant, literate, not a Communist party member, single, claimed she had never been convicted of any crime.

In reference to the case testified that: During the German occupation of Ivatsevichi, I lived in the village. Germans kicked out most of the owners from their homes and moved in themselves. The Germans robbed the villagers of all their possessions. They built a gallows on the outskirts of the village and hanged citizens Tsack, Minchuk, and Khlyudko for their ties to partisans. Germans grabbed people on the streets and locked them in jail. The prisoners were not fed. During interrogations they were beaten and also killed. Sometimes, prisoners died from attrition right on the street, while being marched from the interrogation back to the jail. Thus, Germans did in citizen Bogatyreva and Victor Bogudsky. Many prisoners suffocated to death or committed suicide by cutting themselves with glass or knives. Ivan Chmir and Ivan Goytsik died this way one night when they cut themselves in a prison bathroom. Germans ordered the villagers not to come outside after 5 PM. Once in the winter, citizen Yekaterina Titko left her house after 5 PM to go to a neighbor's house. A German sentry shot and killed her immediately, 10 minutes away from her house. Several days later, at 5 PM, a Belarusian man, whose last name I don't remember, was passing by the German Commander's Quarters. The Germans shot him, hid his body and covered the blood on the street with sand. I saw a peasant, whose last name I don't remember, driving a horse-drawn carriage loaded with firewood. And when he came upon a German car, he turned off the road. A German jumped out of the car and beat the peasant with a rubber baton till the man passed out. I saw Germans marching Russian POW's out into the fields, to be shot. The Germans themselves were riding bicycles fast, and were forcing the POW's to run ahead of them by hitting them with rubber batons. Behind the POW's, the Germans marched the village Jews. The Jews were ordered to take along shovels, to bury the bodies after the execution. Once I saw Germans shooting Russian POW's at the train station, when the prisoners came off the train to get some water. One wounded soldier begged the Germans to finish him off. A German laughed and taunted him for awhile and then hit him on the head with the butt of his rifle and killed him. In the summer of 1942 the Germans started a Jewish pogrom. The Jews were marched for the execution in groups, or driven in trucks. In the meanwhile, they were constantly beaten with rubber batons. Mothers were carrying their children. Those who cried or tried to escape were shot on the spot. Esther Zavadsky and others were killed this way. I heard the screams and cries of the Jews when they were being shot. I heard the shots. Together with the Jews, the Germans killed my relatives, Belarusians, Agaphya Multan and her 5 children and a Polish family, Shimansky -- 5 people. Germans dug several trenches in the fields and were dumping bodies of the villagers there on a daily basis. Germans grabbed people on the streets, checked their papers, and if they didn't have proper ID's, they were shot on the spot. Altogether, Germans killed outright or tormented to death more than 350 Ivatsevichi residents. Also, Germans forcibly took some villagers into German slavery. More than 100 villagers were taken. The cruelest officers were: police commandant Negrebetsky, Yegorov, Shulka, Max, and Bliffert. All of them were giving execution orders. There is nothing else to add. The transcript of my testimony was recorded correctly.

Eyewitness Testimony Transcript

January 18, 1945. Kossovo DA investigator, Serova, questioned a witness, citizen Borutsky, Ivan Ivanovich, cautioned in accordance with article 136 of the Penal Code. Citizen Borutsky, born in 1900 in the village of Ruzhany, Kossovo Region, and presently residing in Kossovo, Brest Oblast, Belarusian, peasant, literate, not a Communist party member, married, claimed he had never been convicted of any crime.

In reference to the case testified that: During the German occupation of Ivatsevichi, I was in the village. Germans were very cruel to the villagers. They built two jails in the village. The Germans seized people on the streets. Those who didn't carry ID's were killed on the spot. Thus they grabbed citizen Volochko, marched her down the street, gagged her with rags and beat her with a baton, took her to the outskirts of the village and shot her dead. The Shimansky family, 5 people in all, and the Multan family, 6 people, were killed the same way. Germans hanged citizen Khlyudko and others on the gallows. All the villagers were forced to watch the execution; those who did not want to watch were beaten with rubber batons. Germans robbed all Jews of their possessions and gathered them all together on the outskirts of the village. In the winter, Germans forced half-dressed Jews into the woods where many Jews froze to death. In the summer of 1942 Germans started a Jewish pogrom. All the Jews were marched into a field on the outskirts of the village and forced to dig a trench. They were forced to get undressed and then they were shot to death. Their bodies were buried in the trench. The clothes of the dead Jews were divided between the Germans. Those Jews, who refused to go with the others, hid, or ran away during the pogrom, were massacred by the Germans – they were hacked into pieces with axes. Having done in all the Jews, Germans started killing Poles and Belarusians. They were shot in the night, in the fields, in groups, and then buried in trenches in the fields. The entire village population was forced to work every day, and people were beaten at work with no reason whatsoever. The Germans took away from the villagers all their valuable possessions. Not a day went by without Germans killing or robbing the local population. All in all, during the occupation, Germans killed outright or tormented to death over 350 villagers. When they were retreating, the Germans burned most of the houses in the village and forcibly marched some villagers to Germany, into German slavery. Germans took from Ivatsevichi to Germany more than 100 villagers. There is nothing else to add. The transcript of my testimony was recorded correctly.

Barutsky, Ivan (signature)

People's investigator, Serova

Eyewitness Testimony Transcript

January 17, 1945. Kossovo DA investigator, Serova, questioned a witness, citizen Shibylinsky, Josef Stanislavovich, cautioned in accordance with article 136 of the Belarusian Penal Code.

Citizen Shibilinsky, Josef Stanislavovich, born 1901 in the village of Kovalevo, Warsaw Oblast, Poland, now residing in the village of Ivatsevichi, Kossovo Region, Brest Oblast, Pole, peasant, literate, not a Communist Party member, married, claimed he had never been convicted of any crime.

In reference to the case testified that: I have been living in the village of Ivatsevichi, Brest Oblast, since 1924. During the German occupation, I saw Germans killing and tormenting the people of Ivatsevichi. On the first day of the occupation, Germans built a gallows and two jails. Germans searched every house and took away people's property. Many people were kicked out of their homes and the Germans moved in. Every day all the villagers were forced to go and do hard work- build houses, roads, etc. All the Jews were forced to the outskirts of the village. That area was fenced with barbed wire and the Germans started calling it- the Ghetto. Every day Germans beat the Jews while they worked, broke their arms and legs, beat them with rubber batons. The only food the Jews received was 200 g of bread a day, nothing else. Many Jews died in the Ghetto or at work. The Jews were ordered to wear yellow stars and yellow circles on their chests and backs. Those who refused were beaten. Every day people were taken into the Commander's Quarters and killed to death. One of them was my friend, Zemba. Before murdering him, the policeman pulled out Zemba's gold teeth. Germans hanged on the gallows 4 people for their ties to partisans. The names of the people were: Khlyudko, Syamova and 2 others, whose last names I don't know. All the villagers were forced to go against their will to the gallows, to watch the execution. Those who didn't want to go were beaten. The Germans cut braids off of the women and beards of the men. The jails were packed with people and many prisoners suffocated for the lack of air. One night, in the winter of 1942, the Germans forced the Jews from the Ghetto into the streets and marched them into the woods. Many were barefoot, very lightly dressed, and half-dressed. Many froze to death right there and then, in the field or in the woods, from severe cold. Several days later the Jews came back from the woods to Ivatsevichi. In September 1942, Germans started a Jewish pogrom. All the Jews were gathered in the Ghetto, and taken in trucks in the field, 1 km away from the village. The Jews were forced to dig a trench, then they were ordered to undress, line up along the trench, and then they were shot. I personally was forced to come into the field to fill in the trench after the execution. I saw the Germans bringing in the Jews, forcing them to undress. When the Jews took off their clothes, I saw that their bodies were covered with wounds, bruises from beatings, and swellings. The Jews were ordered to line up along the trench, facing the trench, and then they were shot with machine-guns in the backs of their heads. One Jew was ordered to come down into the trench and walk on top of the bodies to make room for more victims, and then he also was shot. The trench was 10 x (the second number is cut off), and in it the Germans fit 290 people. I and some other villagers filled in the trench, but one week later blood seeped through the ground and we had to pile more soil on top. After the Germans finished off the Jews, they started killing Poles and Belarusians. Their bodies were buried in other trenches near the village. All in all, Germans killed and tormented to death over 350 villagers. Among the dead were my friend Milyukovsky (?), Bogutsky was tortured to death in the jail, also, Dr. Zucker, Yanovich, Abramochik ?? were also killed, and many others. When they were retreating in 1944, the Germans burned down the village. More than 100 villagers were force marched to Germany.

Shibylinsky (signature)
People's investigator, Serova

List
of Soviet citizens shot, hanged, and otherwise massacred by
Nazi occupiers in the village of Ivatsevichi, Kossovo Region

	Last name, first name, patronymic	Year of birth	Ethnic group	Sex	Last occupation
1	Milyukovsky, Ivan	1910	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
2	Krasnoslavsky(?), Vasil	1905	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
3	Fimer, Abram	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
4	Illegible	1920	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
5	Zonim, Abram	1905	Jewish	Male	Cobbler
6	Fireman, Isaac	1895	Jewish	Male	Cobbler
7	Volynsky, Iritsko (??)	1875	Jewish	Male	Miller
8	Yanovich(?), Shlyomi	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
9	Fireshtein, Shimel	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
10	Rogominer (?), Abram	1880	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
11	Mokhorinsky, Shimel	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
12	Syransky, Abram	1900	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
13	Uchshtein (??), Mira	1877	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
14	U...mov, Isac	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
15	Kumizevsky, Michail	1905	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
16	Veseliy, Zikim	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
17	Kiromotsky, Feig	1888	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
18	Yeselevich, Zakelem	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
19	Shvartz, Frantz	1892	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
20	Fedyuk, Ivan	1909	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
21	Medrosh, Grishko	1905	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
22	Vasendin, Fedy	1880	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
23	Raushtein, Abram	1916	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
24	Grishkevich, Mikhail	1905	Pole	Male	Forrester

6	Fireman, Isaac	1895	Jewish	Male	
7	Volynsky, Iritsko (??)	1875	Jewish	Male	Miller
8	Yanovich(?), Shlyomi	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
9	Fireshtein, Shimel	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
10	Rogominer (?), Abram	1880	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
11	Mokhorinsky, Shimel	1902	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
12	Syransky, Abram	1900	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
13	Uchshtein (??), Mira	1877	Jewish	Male	Cobbler
14	U....mov, Isasc	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
15	Kumizevsky, Michail	1805	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
16	Veseliy, Zikim	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
17	Kiromotsky, Feig	1888	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
18	Yeselevich, Zakelem	1895	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
19	Shvartz, Frantz	1892	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
20	Fedyuk, Ivan	1809	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
21	Medrosh, Grishko	1905	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
22	Vasendin, Fedy	1880	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
23	Raushtein, Abram	1916	Jewish	Male	Sales clerk
24	Grishkevich, Mikhail	1905	Pole	Male	Forrester
25	Yablinsky, Ivan	1895	Jewish	Male	
26	Abramovich, Shimson	1885	Jewish	Male	
27	Romanyuk, Ivan	1895	Jewish	Male	
28	Shimansky, Ivan (Semyon)	1895	Pole	Male	?
29	Shimanskaya, Marya	1900	Pole	Female	Housewife
30	Shimansky, Vladislav	1923	Pole	Male	
31	Shimansky, Stepan	1926	Pole	Male	
32	Shimansky, Ivan	1928	Pole	Male	
33	Shimansky, Vasil	1935	Pole	Male	
34	Shimanskaya, Yekaterina	1940	Pole	Female	
35	Cherkovsky, Isaac	1880	Pole	Male	Miller
36	Klimitkevich, Vladislav	1902	Pole	Male	?
37	Yudvig, Vladislav	1902	Pole	Male	?
38	Zemba, Ivan	1900	Pole	Male	Stonemason
39	Multan, Mirya	1910	Belarusian	Female	Housewife
40	Multan, Yelena	1926	Belarusian	Female	?
41	Miltan, Petr	1940	Belarusian	Male	?
42	Volunskya ????	1900	Jewish	Female	Housewife
43	Zakim, Yemsa (?)	1900	Jewish	Female	
44	Zakim, Raya	1932	Jewish	Female	
45	Zakim, Abram	1939	Jewish	Male	
46	Zakim, Isaac	1940	Jewish	Male	
47	Yanovich, Riva	1900	Jewish	Female	Housewife
48	Fierlishtein, Ruth (?)	1905	Jewish	Female	Housewife
49	Fierlishtein	1936	Jewish	Female	
50	Rogatner, Sophia	1930	Jewish	Female	
51	Yesilevich, Sophia	1905	Jewish	Female	
52	Zuker, Anatoly (?)	1905	Jewish	Male	Doctor
53	Bogutsky	1902	Pole	Male	Telephone operator

